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ABSTRACT

Through narration and with the aid of 27 tables and 11 figures, this book reports on the school supervision system in four African countries. (The research is part of a larger series of studies sponsored by UNESCO and the International Institute for Educational Planning.) The countries studied were Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The study examined the role played by individual supervisors and supervision services provided by national education departments and regional authorities. Depending on the country, data for the study were gathered from interviews with national and regional administrators, various types of inspectors and consultants, principals, and teachers. The samples illustrate the daily operation and the circumstance within which supervisors actually work. The report is organized into four parts: (1) "General Overview of Supervision and Support Structures"; (2) "Management of Supervision and Support Services"; (3) "The Actual Operation of Supervision and Support Services"; and (4) "Overall Assessment." Two major conclusions of the study are that reform is feasible with minimal additional financing and that supervision services should concentrate on the needs of individual disadvantaged schools. This publication forms the first volume of the study. Volume 2 presents the four national diagnoses undertaken as part of the study. (WFA)

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IIEP research and studies programme

Trends in school supervision

School supervision in four African countries:

Volume I

Challenges and reforms

Anton De Grauwe

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Anton De Grauwe

International Institute for Educational Planning

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AT	Advisory Teacher
B. Ed.	Bachelors in Education
BETD	Basic Education Teachers Diploma
CE	Certificate in Education
CTO	Central Transport Organization
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Officer
ELTSP	English Language Teaching Support Project
EO	Education Officer
IE	Inspector of Education
M. Ed	Masters in Education
NER	Net enrolment rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
PSI	Primary School Inspector
REO	Regional Education Officer
SAT	Senior Advisory Teacher
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SIE	Senior Inspector of Education
SSMDP	Secondary Schools Management Development Project

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PRESENTATION OF THE SERIES

This publication forms part of a series on 'Trends in school supervision', which accompanies the implementation of an IIEP project on 'Improving teacher supervision and support services for basic education'. The project, which began in 1996, is one of the main research components of the Institute's Medium Term Plan 1996-2001. The Institute wishes to express its sincere thanks to BMZ (the German Federal Ministry for Technical Co-operation) and to UNICEF for their support in the implementation of this project.

Earlier research, at the Institute and elsewhere, has pointed to the need, in an era of increased decentralization and school autonomy, to strengthen the skills of personnel involved in supervision and support at local level and in schools.

Two related points are worth mentioning here, as they form both the background to and the rationale for the IIEP's concern with this area of management. Firstly, professional supervision and support services for teachers, although existing in almost every country for a long time, have been ignored, increasingly so since resources have become more scarce. This neglect has, until recent times, been reflected by a similar indifference among researchers. Secondly, one important reason why the quality of basic education has deteriorated in many contexts is precisely related to the weakening of these services.

The IIEP project, developed against this background, consists of research, training and dissemination activities. Its specific objectives are to assist countries in diagnosing and reforming the existing services of supervision and support, and to identify promising strategies for their reorganization and strengthening. The series of

publications, of which this monograph forms a part, is the result of research, implemented in several regions, to address a number of questions, such as:

- How are supervision and support organized in different countries? What have been the major trends in their recent evolution?
- What are the principal problems which supervision and support services are presently facing in terms of: organizational structures; overall management; and daily functioning?
- To what extent and under what conditions do these services have a positive impact on the quality of the teaching-learning processes in schools?
- What are the major innovations taking place, mainly in respect of the devolution of supervision and support to the school-site level? How do these innovations operate? What are the main results?

In order to formulate answers to these questions, the project elaborated the following operational definition of school supervision and support services: all those services whose main function is to control and evaluate, and/or advise and support school heads and teachers. The focus of the project is on external supervision and support, that is to say on the work of inspectors, supervisors, advisers, counsellors, etc. located outside the school, at local, regional or central levels. A common characteristic of these officers is that regular visits to schools are an essential part of their mandate.

However, many countries, in their attempts to reform and innovate supervision, are increasingly relying on in-school or community-based strategies (such as resource centres, school clusters, in-school supervision by the principal or by peers, school-based management) to complement – if not to replace – external supervision and support. The project therefore also pays attention to a number of such innovations and, in more general terms, the strengths and weaknesses

of strategies, aiming at the reinforcement of internal quality-control mechanisms.

This series 'Trends in school supervision', thus consists of a variety of titles: national diagnoses on supervision and support, comparative analyses of the situation by region, case studies on innovative experiences, monographs and discussion papers on specific management issues. It is hoped that this series will fill a gap in education research as well as be an inspiration, in particular to policy-makers intending to reform supervision, and to supervisors who want to improve on their practice.

Other titles in the series include:

- Ali, M.A. 1998. *Supervision for teacher development: a proposal for Pakistan*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Carron, G.; De Grauwe, A. 1997. *Current issues in supervision: a literature review*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Carron, G.; De Grauwe, A.; Govinda, R. 1998. *Supervision and support services in Asia. Volume I: A comparative analysis. Volume II: National diagnoses (Bangladesh, the State of Uttar Pradesh in India, the Republic of Korea, Nepal and Sri Lanka)*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Fergusson, V. 1998. *Supervision for the self-managing school: the New Zealand experience*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Gurr, D. 1999. *From supervision to quality assurance: the case of the State of Victoria, Australia*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.

- Khaniya, T.R. 1997. *Teacher support through resource centres: the Nepalese case*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Perera, W.J. 1997. *Changing schools from within: a management intervention for improving school functioning in Sri Lanka*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Wilcox, B. 2000. *Making school inspection visits more effective: the English experience*. Paris: UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning.

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SUMMARY

Improving the quality of schools and the achievement of students remains a priority throughout the world, not least in the developing countries. To monitor quality, national authorities rely strongly on the school supervision system. But that system has not always been able to play that role, plagued as it is by a lack of resources, an inefficient structure and an ambiguity about its main functions. Much of our knowledge about the challenges facing supervision services and individual supervisors is based on anecdotal evidence and the somewhat repetitive complaints of supervisors themselves and of school staff. This publication intends to make up for this lack of data by examining the situation of four countries in the Eastern- and Southern-African region: Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Methodology

The study is the result of work undertaken by four national teams, which generally included one or more practising supervisors, based at central and/or regional level and an experienced researcher. Each report was prepared in two stages. In a first stage, the present state of supervision and support services was examined at national level, in order to arrive at an overall picture of their structure and management. In a second stage, the actual operation of these services in one region or district became the focus. This second step therefore covered only a limited number of supervisors and schools. Its purpose was not to arrive at a complete picture of supervision in the whole region under study, but to gain an overview of how supervisors operate and the problems they encounter. Once the four studies were finalized, the IIEP prepared a comparative analysis and drew a number of conclusions for the reform of supervision.

The challenges

Supervision services in the four countries face a myriad of problems, and it is useful to distinguish between root causes and results. The root causes can be classified in three categories: (i) a lack of resources; (ii) inefficient management; and (iii) an organizational structure not adapted to the present realities.

The lack of resources has multiple implications. The number of supervisors has not kept pace with the numbers of schools and teachers; as a result, the school/supervisor and teacher/supervisor ratios are high. This workload becomes more difficult to manage if it is combined with a lack of financial and material resources. Supervision offices in Tanzania suffer most and some have become almost ghost-like. Elsewhere, the situation is less serious, but does not justify complacency, as the service remains under-financed in all four countries.

Management problems are experienced in several areas of management: selection and recruitment; training; career development and incentives; and support and evaluation. Identifying the 'right' **recruitment** criteria is not an easy matter. The situation is particularly complicated at secondary level: supervisors are generally recruited from among subject specialists, few have experience in school management and they occupy a post at the same grade as the secondary-school principals. Many principals therefore do not consider supervisors as their superiors and refuse their advice. Maybe one should think about creating a specific cadre of school-management supervisors, as distinct from subject inspectors, with recruitment criteria and a post of a grade adapted to their more demanding job description. In all four countries, there are concerns with both the organization and the content of **training** courses, which are ad hoc rather than part of an overall programme of

professional development, and seldom seem to address the real needs of supervision staff. A further management problem concerns the lack of **career development** opportunities: for most supervisors, their present post is the culmination of their career, a reward for many years of service in schools. This evidently risks turning the supervision service into a conservative body, with little motivation to innovate and look for new challenges.

The organizational problems which supervision experiences relate to four points. Firstly, in two countries, the service is still relatively young and its present structure lacks clarity (in Namibia) or logic (in Botswana). Secondly, co-ordination is difficult, especially between the supervision service and other services which work towards pedagogical improvement, such as teacher training, teacher resource centres, curriculum development and examinations. The follow-up to school visits suffers from this lack of co-ordination. Recommendations made in inspection reports and addressed to the administrative and/or pedagogical authorities, remain words in the wind, which frustrates the school staff as well as the supervisors. A third issue concerns the very demanding job description of supervisors, who are asked to handle a load of administrative and pedagogical tasks. The fourth point in this regard might well be the most significant. In all four countries, supervisors feel constrained - even frustrated - by their lack of autonomy and authority to take action, especially on their own recommendations. School heads are in a similar situation. Overcoming these constraints implies, however, a profound change in the management system and culture and – but less crucially – a strengthening of management capacities at district and school levels.

The results of these varied problems are that supervisors face a heavy workload with few resources. This leads to a lack of motivation

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and has a negative impact on the actual operation of the service. Inspectors, who do not have the resources nor the time to give detailed and profound support to schools, quickly, as a defensive reaction, take on control-oriented and critical attitudes which are poorly appreciated by school staff. The overall conclusion seems to be that there is insufficient close and supportive contact – through school visits, seminars, courses and so on – between supervisors and schools. In particular, follow-up actions on visits or reports are scarce. It is not surprising then that many schools feel that the overall impact of the supervision and support service on what goes on in school is weak.

The reforms

Managers and decision-makers are conscious of these weaknesses and challenges and are making attempts to improve the situation: changes are occurring in three main areas: the management, the organization of the service and its actual operation.

All four countries are fully conscious of the perverse effects of some existing management rules and practices. There are indications that policies are being reformulated and that some practices have changed. To give a few examples: in Zimbabwe, recruitment has become more transparent, through systematic advertisement of vacant posts, interviews of candidates, and the convening of a Promotion Committee involving all regional directors. Both Botswana and Namibia see the need to define more clearly the tasks of the different categories of supervision and support staff. In Namibia, this forms an integral part of a Performance Management System, which should clearly set out the tasks of the different officers and the criteria on which they will be evaluated. This will help in monitoring their work and in giving them support.

The second set of reforms concerns the organization and structure, and the responsibilities given to different levels and actors. Four changes can be identified. Firstly, there exists a willingness to co-ordinate more strongly existing services at a central level. Secondly, to allow for a closer and more regular supervision of schools, these are brought together into clusters and officers are given the responsibility for one such group of schools, with their office sometimes being located at that level. Thirdly, and following logically from the above, there is an increased stress on in-school supervision and support. In Botswana, for instance, Staff Development Committees are established in secondary schools: they carry out needs assessment and draw up programmes for school-based training, using expertise from within or outside the school. In Zimbabwe, headteachers of both primary and secondary schools have received or are receiving training in school management. In principle, each school has a Board, with members of the administration and teacher representatives, which supervises, assists and advises teachers, and also has to assess and recommend them for promotion. Fourthly, the civil society and certain school communities are gradually being given an increased role in monitoring the functioning and quality of schools.

A third set of reforms concerns the actual operation and the focus of supervision activities, in particular school visits. In some cases, inspectors work more as a team than as individuals and the focus shifts from individual teacher inspection to school evaluation. Openness and transparency are increasingly encouraged, implying that schools will be informed beforehand of visits. As a result, where these reforms are actually being implemented, teachers are beginning to consider inspectors as sources of help rather than of criticism. One final trend, which seems more the result of practical constraints than a well-designed policy, lies in focusing supervision and support

interventions on the schools most in need of these. The challenge now is to turn an existing but very ad-hoc practice into a well thought-out policy. A diversified supervision system, which concentrates on the most remote and isolated schools and on the least experienced or weakest teachers, is a promising way out, not only to solve several practical problems, but also to guarantee a better impact of supervision services on schools.

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INTRODUCTION

This report compares the management and the operation of school supervision and support in four countries: Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania[1] and Zimbabwe. The countries were selected in such a way that the set included more developed (Botswana) and least developed (Tanzania) countries, countries which recently became independent (Namibia) and those which formed part of the first wave of Africa's drive for independence (Tanzania), with populations ranging from just over a million (Botswana, Namibia) to over some 10 million (Zimbabwe) to some 30 million (Tanzania). All have made major efforts to increase access to basic education: Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe come close to achieving universal primary education, while Tanzania has in recent years lost much of the progress made in earlier decades and continues to face a severe challenge: only about half of the children between six and eleven are at present enrolled.

1. Methodology

The report is the result of work undertaken by four national teams, as part of an international project on *Improving teacher supervision and support services for basic education*. In each country, a research team was set up, which generally included one or more practising supervisors, based at central and/or regional level, and an experienced researcher. These teams worked according to a set of detailed guidelines, prepared by the IIEP, and wrote their report in two distinct stages. In the first stage, the present state of supervision and support services was examined **at national level**. The objective was to arrive at an overall picture of the **structure and management**

1. The United Republic of Tanzania constitutes Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, which have separate Education Ministries and a different management system. Zanzibar took part only in the first stage of this exercise by preparing a brief report on the structures, management and main problems of its supervision services. No case study was undertaken.

of these services, with an outline of the main problems they experience, without entering into the details of their daily operation. This first step relied mainly, if not exclusively, on a perusal of the available literature, reports, official documents and statistical data. In the second stage, the **actual operation** of supervision services became the focus, by examining their situation **in one region**. This second step therefore covered only a limited number of supervisors and of schools. Its purpose was not to arrive at a complete picture of supervision in the whole region under study, but to gain an overview of how supervisors operate and the problems they encounter. The collection of information for this regional case study relied mainly on two sources: interviews with a limited number of supervisors; and group discussions, with questionnaires addressed to headteachers and/or teachers in a few schools.

The samples of supervisors, schools and teachers who were interviewed as part of the regional case study differed quite a bit in size and make-up from one country to another, the main reason being that the size of the region or district also varied greatly. In Botswana, the case study covered the southern part of the Central region and the team interviewed only the Regional Education Officer (REO), four inspectors and one in-service officer, in addition to staff from 10 schools. In Namibia, the region selected was Ondangwa West, but special attention was given to the Okahao inspection circuit, one of eight circuits within this region. The seven inspectors and 11 advisory teachers come from the whole region, while the 11 headteachers were chosen from among the 42 schools in the Okahao circuit. In Tanzania Mainland, the samples of staff interviewed all came from the Muheza district, which forms part of the Tanga region in the north of the country. In Zimbabwe, finally, the study was undertaken on Kwekwe district, where one Education Officer (EO) and five District Education

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Officers (DEO), 12 school headteachers and 35 teachers were interviewed (see *Table 1).*

The samples were not chosen to be representative of the national situation, but to illustrate with more details and more vividly the daily operation and the circumstances within which supervisors actually work. While the situation they depict is generally not very different from that of other areas, care should, nevertheless, be exercised when interpreting the results from these case studies.

Table 1. Area and personnel investigated for regional case study

Country	Area of investigation	Personnel interviewed[2]
Botswana	Southern part of Central region	• 1 regional education officer • 4 inspectors • 1 in-service officer • 7 headteachers (5 primary, 2 junior secondary) • teachers in 10 schools (5 primary, 5 junior secondary)
Namibia	Okahao circuit in Ondangwa West region	• 7 inspectors • 11 advisory teachers • 11 primary-school headteachers • teachers of 11 schools
Tanzania	Muheza district in Tanga region	• 4 school inspectors • 4 district education officers • 2 teacher service commission officials • 8 Ward education co-ordinators • 20 primary-school headteachers • teachers in 20 primary schools
Zimbabwe	Kwekwe district in Midlands region	• 1 education officer • 5 district education officers • 12 primary-school heads • 35 primary-school teachers in 12 schools

2. All listed staff were interviewed. To some staff, in addition, questionnaires were distributed. The case studies contain the relevant details.

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The research teams were asked to define, for the purpose of this project, the term 'supervision and support services' as covering all those services whose **main function** is to inspect, control, evaluate, and/or advise, assist, support school heads and teachers. The main focus of the project was on external supervision and support, that is to say on the work of inspectors, supervisors, advisers, counsellors, etc. located outside the school, at local, regional or central levels. A common characteristic of all these officers is that regular visits to schools form an essential part of their mandate. In-school or community-based devices of supervision and support were also to be considered so as to ensure a full understanding of the functioning of the external services.

2. Background on the four countries[3] and their education systems

The four countries in this comparative study were all formerly colonies of the United Kingdom, but the difference in their dates of independence shows the diversity in their more recent history: Tanzania, 1961; Botswana, 1966; Zimbabwe, 1980; and Namibia, 1990. Their economic development has also been very different, the result being that Tanzania is, at present, one of the least developed countries in Africa, while Botswana is one of the most advanced (see *Table 2* for more detailed data). The AIDS pandemic, however, has hit this country particularly hard, and life expectancy has decreased from 68 years in 1994 to 46 years, according to the latest estimates.

3. The data on Tanzania, in this introduction, refer to Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar combined. No separate data were available in the sources used.

Table 2. Basic indicators[4]

	Population (millions)	GNP per capita (US$)	GNP per capita Average growth 1985-1995	Life expectancy	Aid per capita (US $)	% urban population
Botswana	1.6	3,240	6.1	46	68	50
Namibia	1.7	1,890	2.9	54	108	30
Tanzania	32.9	240	1.0	47	31	32
Zimbabwe	11.9	520	-0.6	51	24	35

Immediately after independence, all four countries experienced a steep expansion in the number of children going to primary school (see *Figure 1* for data on three countries). Tanzania was unable to sustain this development and has seen enrolment rates dropping, especially in the late 1980s. Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe can be said to have come close to universal primary enrolment, although pockets of low enrolment (among nomadic groups and in large commercial farming areas) remain. (Recent data on Botswana are somewhat misleading: the drop in the net enrolment rate from 89 per cent in 1985 to 81 per cent in 1996 is largely the result of a recent policy decision to decrease the admission age at primary level (from seven to six) and the resulting change in calculating the rate. The NER stood in 1994, just before the policy change, at 96 per cent, which shows better the continuing increase in enrolment). Enrolment at secondary education has also experienced a sizeable increase in Botswana and Namibia, but less so in Zimbabwe, while it remains very low in Tanzania. Regional disparities are, undoubtedly, more important than those concerning gender: the enrolment rate of girls at primary level is equal to, if not higher than, that of boys. *Table 3*

4. For purposes of comparison, all data are taken from the indicators database, made available by the World Bank on its web-site (http://www.worldbank.org/data/). They refer to 1998 or 1999.

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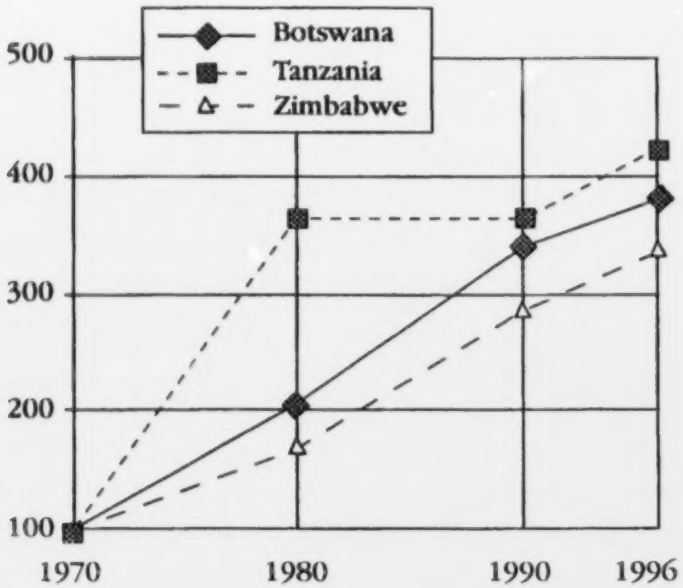
presents some basic indicators on the development of the education system. One can see that education occupies a priority position in public policy given that it receives a significant share of the budget: not less than 20 per cent in the different countries.

With the exception of Tanzania, teachers' qualifications have improved significantly over recent years. In Botswana, for instance, teachers are now trained up to Diploma level. For secondary schools, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe still experience some teacher shortages and have to rely on expatriates. Pupil/teacher ratios in all four countries decreased between 1980 and 1995, although there has been a slight increase in both Tanzania and Zimbabwe in recent years (see *Table 4*).

Figure 1. Index of growth of primary enrolment (1970 = 100) [5]



5. No comparable data are available in the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook on Namibia, which obtained independence only in 1990.

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Table 3. Basic indicators on education[6]

	NER primary Total		NER primary girls	Pupil/ Teacher ratio 1996		GER secondary		Spending on educ. as % of budget	
	1985	1996	1996	primary	secondary	1985	1996	1985	1996
Botswana	89	81	83	25	18	29	65	15.4	21.8
Namibia[7]	..	91	92	32	21	39	61	..	25.6
Tanzania[8]	56	48	49	36	17	3	5	15.6	23.0
Zimbabwe[9]	136	113	111	39	27	41	49	15.0	22.9

Table 4. Pupil/teacher ratios at primary level

	Botswana	Namibia	Tanzania	Zimbabwe
1970	36	..	46	37
1980	32	..	41	44
1990	32	32	35	36
1996	25	..	36	39

The structure of the education system in the four countries is as follows: two years of pre-primary, followed by seven years of primary and five (Botswana, Namibia) or six (Tanzania, Zimbabwe) years of secondary, in two cycles. The successful expansion of primary enrolment has led to a redefinition of the term 'basic education', which is now considered to last in Botswana 10 years and to cover primary and junior secondary.

6. For purposes of comparison, data for *Tables 2* and *3* and for *Figure 1* are taken from UNESCO's *Statistical Yearbook 1998*.
7. Data for pupil/teacher ratios are for 1990.
8. Data for current public spending only.
9. Data for GER primary. Data for spending on education in 1996 come from national sources.

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All four countries have kept some parts of their colonial legacy, which explains the similarities in, for example, the education structure and in some aspects of educational management. At present, their policies continue to be somewhat influenced from experiences in the United Kingdom, sometimes through reform projects, financed by international agencies. The trend towards giving schools more autonomy and the efforts to build up resource centres can be quoted as examples, although such impact is of course tempered strongly by the different policy environments and by national initiatives.

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I. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES

1. Historical background

The creation of inspection services accompanied the introduction of formal public education in each country: as early as the 1920s for instance in Tanzania[10] and the 1930s in Zimbabwe (for white education; African education had to wait until 1972 to see its first inspectors).

The expansion of the system after independence, in numbers of schools, students and teachers, was accompanied by a slower growth in the number of supervision officers. To allow supervision services to function efficiently with an increased workload, in different countries, several strategies were used:

- separating primary from secondary supervision;
- decentralizing some services;
- creating specific support services.

The following paragraphs comment on these three strategies. In Botswana and Zimbabwe, a separation was made in the 1970s between supervisors in charge of primary and secondary education. Such a separation already existed in Tanzania at that time, but has not yet been introduced in Namibia. In Zanzibar, from 1984 onwards, a distinction was made between primary inspectors, secondary inspectors and inspectors for specific subjects, such as religious studies and Arabic, who serve both levels. Two further categories

10. The remainder of the document will refer to Tanzania Mainland as 'Tanzania'. Zanzibar will be considered as a separate case, although it forms part of the United Republic of Tanzania.

have since been created: junior work inspectors in 1987, and inspectors for headteachers in 1996.

All countries, with the understandable exception of Zanzibar, have at different moments in time decentralized the supervision tasks to officers based at regional or district level. This process has not been problem free. In Botswana, it has led to a lack of subject-specific officers for secondary subjects in the regional offices, because of the financial burden the appointment of a full cadre of officers in each region would represent. Moreover, the fact that the regional offices for primary and secondary education do not coexist has resulted in poor co-ordination. In Tanzania, the Decentralization Act of 1972 implied that inspectors became accountable to district authorities rather than to the Ministry of Education. As a result, the central co-ordination system was abolished, but this was deplored to such an extent that the central Inspectorate Department was re-established in 1978.

Namibia, with quite a different background, experiences at present a similar problem of co-ordination and leadership. This is the result of its particular history rather than a poorly managed decentralization process. Before independence, there were 11 different supervision and support authorities. Since 1990, regional offices have to a large extent retained the autonomy of those pre-independence authorities. In order to offer leadership and policy guidance, in 1996, a Directorate Inspectorate and Advisory Service was established, within an overall effort to build up a unitary service. Botswana is also planning to set up a similar central department, which will be responsible for policy-making, planning and co-ordination of inspection at all levels. Zanzibar established an inspectorate unit in 1984, which became a department in 1992 then a division (within the Department of Professional Services) in 1996.

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A third way of managing an increased workload is to create special staff for support services, as distinct from supervision. This has clearly been the case in Botswana, where the in-service officers undertake this task, and in Namibia, with the creation of the advisory teachers. Zanzibar also has a group of teacher advisers. In Tanzania and Zimbabwe the inspectors or education officers, as they are called in Zimbabwe, are expected to perform both inspection and advice tasks. Almost everywhere, nonetheless, attention is increasingly being paid to offering more direct support to schools, through resource centres, for example.

These changes have taken place within a policy environment recently characterized by a change of perspective on the distribution of tasks and authority between the education system and the schools. More autonomy is being given to schools, and supervision services are being asked to be more development-oriented and less control-focused. This has also led to structural transformations, in an attempt to decrease the distance between supervisors and schools.

2. The overall structure

While the different types of reform, described above, succeeded to some extent in lessening the workload and simplifying the job description of individual officers, they also resulted in giving school supervision as a whole a more complicated structure.

The following overview of the structures of primary-school supervision indicates that this complexity is mainly a factor of the degree of decentralization. Everywhere, the distance between the office and the schools is difficult to bridge. As this study will highlight, transportation and travel allocation issues therefore become weighty considerations in the management of these services. At the same time, efforts are made to bring supervisors closer to the school, through

the creation of additional administrative levels. In Namibia, for instance, the idea has been mooted to set up district offices to serve areas least accessible to the regional offices. The creation of additional levels has nowhere been accompanied by the abolition of existing ones, the result being that schools in some cases will be supervised by officers from different levels, with the ensuing problems of co-ordination.

In all countries, with the exception of Zanzibar, officers are at present functioning at least at three levels: central, regional, district or local. Supervisors, who are actually in charge of visiting schools, are of course posted at the lowest level. However, in the less populated countries (Botswana and Namibia), this lowest level does not correspond to an office as such, but to an area of responsibility. In Tanzania, a fourth level under the district exists: the ward office, but so far it plays no official role in supervision.

At secondary level, because services are less decentralized, the structure is less complex. Information on these structures is available for Zimbabwe and Botswana. In the case of Tanzania this information was not collected, while in Namibia no separation exists between primary and secondary supervision. In Zanzibar, primary and secondary supervisors belong to the same service, based at central level. In Botswana and Zimbabwe, secondary-school supervisors operate mainly from the regional level, and are not further decentralized. A first reason is evident: the number of secondary schools is smaller. A second reason is equally important: secondary-school supervisors are generally subject-specific. This means that decentralizing them to local level would imply a multiplication of vast teams in each office, a burden no country can afford at present. In Botswana, even the regional offices do not yet have a full staffing of subject supervisors, for this precise reason.

Primary school supervision structures

The following paragraphs describe, for each country, the primary school supervision structure and indicate the actor or actors mainly in charge of visiting schools.

▩ *Botswana*

Central: Ministry of Education – Department of Primary Education (inspection being a unit within this department);

Regional: Six Regional Offices (with a Regional Education Officer (REO) in charge);

Local: The regional offices are divided into four or more inspectoral areas, for each of which a Senior Education Officer (SEO) is responsible.

This SEO is the main supervisory actor.

▩ *Namibia*

Central: Ministry of Basic Education - Directorate Inspectorate and Advisory Services (which includes a section for inspection and one for education advice);

Regional: Seven regional offices, with separate sections called 'Advisory services' and 'Schools and hostels management', which includes the inspectors of education and the hostels officers. A region has either one or two senior inspectors of education (SIE) and an equal number of senior advisory teachers (SAT). The number of inspectors of education (IE) and advisory teachers (AT) varies significantly between regions;

Local: Districts/circuits: depending on the region, a further division is made, for inspection purposes, into circuits. In addition, it has

been proposed that seven district offices be set up to serve areas least accessible to the regional offices.

The main supervisory actors are the inspectors (SIE or IE), and the advisory teachers (SAT or AT), most of whom are working in the regional offices.

▩ *Tanzania*

Central: Ministry of Education – Inspectorate Division, headed by the Chief Inspector of Schools, with a basic education, secondary and teacher education section;

Zonal: Seven zones with a Zonal Chief Inspector of Schools in charge;

District: 113 districts, each with a District Chief Inspector of Schools and a number of primary-school inspectors (PSI) who are the actual supervision actors;

Ward: This is not a specific supervision level, but the Ward Education Co-ordinator has a role to play in co-ordinating schools in the ward.

Between the zone and the district there are 20 regions, which do not, however, have any supervision staff. Schools are managed by the districts and not by the regional offices. The main supervisory actor is the PSI.

▩ *Zanzibar*

All inspectors work within the central Ministry of Education. The Division of Inspection forms part of the Department of Professional Services. The head of the Division is the Chief Inspector, followed in the hierarchy by Co-ordinators. They organize the work of primary and secondary inspectors and teacher advisers. Primary inspectors are responsible for particular districts, but are based in the central Ministry.

Zimbabwe

Central: Ministry of Education - Standards Control Unit, within the Schools Division;

Regional: Nine regions, with specific supervision staff for primary (about 5 to 7 education officers (EO) per region) and secondary (about 10 to 15 subject EO per region);

District: Sixty-three district offices, with 4 to 5 district education officers (DEO) for primary schools, each in charge of a circuit of schools.

The main supervisors at primary level are, in this case, the education officers (EO) and the district education officers (DEO).

Secondary school supervision services

Botswana

Central: Ministry of Education - Department of secondary education;

Regional: Five Regional Education Offices, which are not fully functional as they do not all have the necessary subject-specific advisers. These regional offices do not coexist with the ones existing at primary level.

Zimbabwe

The structure is very similar to that of Botswana:

Central: Ministry of Education - Standards Control Unit;

Regional: Nine offices, each with about 10 to 15 subject-specific EOs working in the same offices as primary supervisors.

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A second explanation for the complexity of supervision lies in the fact that, in addition to the classical services, specific external school advisers[11] can also be identified. In Botswana, where this service is well organized, a separate department (the Department of Teacher Training and Development) has existed in the Ministry of Education since 1989, which organizes teacher support. Within the Department, there is an in-service training unit. Originally distinct units existed for primary and secondary education, but they are now being merged. Eleven well-funded and well-functioning teacher resource centres, all over the country, report to this unit: they organize in-service training and visit schools for teacher support, for needs assessment, feedback and follow-up.

In Namibia, as we saw above, the Directorate of the Inspectorate and Advisory Services has a Division for Advisory Services, headed by a SAT. All regions have a section for Advisory Services, with a number of advisory teachers. In addition, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), which has the status of a Directorate, provides support services, by developing programmes and curricula and organizing in-service training. Its staff go out from time to time to visit schools.

Zanzibar has a set of officers called teacher advisers. In Tanzania, on the other hand, there are no specific external school advisers. Teacher resource centres exist, but they seem to organize the residential in-service courses only, rather than go out to schools. The situation is similar in Zimbabwe, where there are no specific external advisers, but an increasing number of resource centres are being set up.

11. In this document, we consider 'external school advisers' only as the staff who go out to schools to offer advice. This therefore excludes, for instance, teacher trainers, based in teacher colleges, for whom school visits are not part of their regular duties.

There are two further factors, which can add to the complexity of the supervision structure. As explained above, different types of schools (primary/secondary) and specific subjects are under the supervision of different officers, while it is also difficult to distinguish supervisors from officers performing purely administrative tasks. In Botswana, for instance, at primary level, the SEO is as much a supervisor as an administrative officer, but at secondary level, separate posts exist for administrative and pedagogical supervision.

3. Official functions

The job descriptions of the primary-school supervisors in all countries show evident similarities, although the emphasis differs from one to another and every country has assigned a few specific tasks. A synthetic description of the main tasks in each of the four countries is given in a separate box. Several general comments can be deduced from this overview. Firstly, in all countries supervisors at district or local level are expected to fulfil an intricate and wide-ranging set of tasks, which can be summarized under four points:

- control as such (which includes inspection visits, sometimes expressed as 'assessment' or 'monitoring');
- support tasks (both informal guidance and more formal in-service training or meetings);
- some administrative duties, without a linkage to control or support (such as: the payment of teacher salaries, the administration of a school feeding programme); and
- a representation or liaison role.

In Namibia, a fifth assignment is explicitly added, namely policy advice. Zimbabwe allots a similar task exclusively to the central level.

In all cases, the main instrument which allows supervisors to perform successfully these tasks, is a visit to schools. As we will see later, because of a combination of practical and budgetary constraints, school visits are not undertaken as regularly as they should be, and the whole efficiency of the service suffers.

Main responsibilities of supervisors

The following analysis focuses on the main supervisory actors, identified above, although information on other levels, when available, is also included.

Botswana

The staff working as SEOs – at different levels – for the Department of Primary Education has the following main tasks:

- supervision: of the school and, in particular, of the headteacher;
- guidance: both informal (during the school visits) and more formal, through arranging for school-based staff development or organizing in-service workshops;
- administrative: personnel management and control over resource use by schools;
- representation: the SEOs represent the Ministry in meetings of local authorities and on various committees.

The picture at secondary level in Botswana is somewhat different. Within the central Ministry, two sets of officers perform supervision tasks: firstly, the

SEO (Administration) supervises schools mainly from an administrative point of view, but also offers advice in this regard to heads. Secondly, the SEO (by subject) centres interventions on professional control and quality improvement. The job description of this second officer is very much like that of his counterpart at primary level. All officers working in the region are subject-specific supervisors and have data collection as an added task.

Namibia

The core duties of the central Directorate of the Inspectorate and Advisory Services are:

- inspection to monitor development and enhance the quality of educational programmes;
- in-service training of school personnel and support through the elaboration of procedures and manuals;
- policy advice: the formulation and development of management policies, and setting national standards for better teaching in schools;
- administering and co-ordinating the National School Feeding Programme;
- inspection of hostels.

The staff at regional level undertake the same tasks. Advisory teachers in the section Advisory Services are responsible for giving subject advice to teachers and to assist them with the teaching process. They also ensure proper implementation of programmes developed by NIED. Inspectors of Education, who work within the division Schools and Hostels Management, are mainly responsible for supervising school management, and therefore focus on the senior staff in the schools.

Tanzania

The duties of the Primary-School Inspector (PSI) are:

- to supervise the implementation of government policy and regulations and to supervise all teachers on probation;
- to ensure the effective implementation of the school curriculum;
- to give advice when and where appropriate, to hold conferences and meetings with school staff and school committees, to support teacher resource centres;
- to supervise and monitor ward education co-ordinators;
- to keep in contact with colleagues and ward education co-ordinators.

Zanzibar

The officers have fairly specific job descriptions, as the designations make quite clear: Primary Inspectors, Secondary Inspectors, Religious Studies and Arabic Inspectors, Junior Work Inspectors (for junior classes), and Inspectors for Headteachers. Generally, inspectors have advisory rather than executive powers, and supervise public as well as private schools.

Zimbabwe

The main duties of the DEO, who supervises primary schools, are quoted as follows in the job description:

- to lead and direct professionally the primary heads and to give expert advice to schools within a circuit;
- to carry out various forms of inspection;
- to ensure the correct implementation of curricula and government regulations in general;

- to compile annual narrative reports on heads of schools, and to compile misconduct reports and handle such cases;
- to plan and control the establishment of schools and teachers in a circuit;
- to superviser and monitor Grade 7 examinations.

The job descriptions of EOs, for primary and for secondary schools, include some tasks which are more support oriented, such as:

- organizing in-service training;
- assisting schools to set up and maintain comprehensive assessment systems;
- giving advice on school administration and on curriculum implementation;
- participating in educational research and surveys.

The mandate of the Standards Control Unit of the Ministry includes:

- to assess the performance of schools and teachers and to oversee curriculum implementation;
- to organize staff development and in-service courses;
- to review policy circulars and procedures, so as to improve the Ministry's professional administration service;
- to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders (other Ministries, universities, NGOs, local communities, etc.);
- to seek to increase resources in schools.

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Ministries of Education have at least two strategies at their disposal to simplify the job description and lessen the workload of officers. Firstly, specific advice-oriented actors can be appointed. This has been done in Botswana and Namibia, but even then most supervisors retain a support function. It is indeed difficult for a supervisor not to offer any advice upon identifying weaknesses in a school. On the other hand, the combination of advice and control within the same officer is not necessarily appreciated by teachers. Secondly, specific service staff can be appointed to handle administrative duties, which would allow professional officers to concentrate on the core pedagogic tasks.[12] Not one country, however, has created such separate staff. Only in Botswana, at secondary level, does there exist a separation between the supervision of schools' administration and that of subject teaching.

The burden of administrative duties makes it difficult for supervisors fully to concentrate on their core tasks. It seems that priority is being given to the administrative duties, not so much because supervisors consider them more fundamental, but as these generally carry an urgency factor. The regional case studies will illustrate this in more detail.

The distribution of tasks between the different levels (central - regional - district) and the logic behind this distribution are somewhat unclear. In Namibia and Botswana, for instance, the centrally located service has a job description not significantly different from the district officers. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, has assigned its central Standards Control Unit a list of tasks which are more oriented towards system evaluation and information for

12. This was done in Chile, among other places, with success: supervisors are spending much more time on their core tasks, and their impact on schools has improved. The strategy is evidently not without an impact on the salary burden.

decision-making at central level. In this case, the distinction between the tasks of central staff and district staff are quite conspicuous, but there remains less clarity concerning the task distribution between regional and district offices and, within this last office, between the EO and the DEOs.

In all four countries, it is more difficult to argue for a specific role for the regional level, in contrast to the central and the district offices. Centrally based supervisors can be assigned responsibilities for the overall planning of the service, for defining guidelines and for giving policy advice. Locally or district-based staff needs to do the actual school visits. But, because of its intermediate position, the regional level has a less straightforward role and a risk of overlap with both higher and lower-based staff, especially at primary level. The scenario where secondary schools are concerned is different, as in most countries secondary-school supervisors remain based for the time being in regional offices. The distance then created between primary and secondary-school supervisors can pose another problem.

4. Relations with other services

Supervision is one of several services aimed at improving pedagogical practices in the classroom. Ideally, the relations between supervision and services in charge of curriculum development, examination and testing, and in particular teacher training, should be close and well organized. In such a way, supervision findings and recommendations could feed into teacher training and curriculum development, while there would be a greater rapport between examinations and the delivered curriculum. Such a coherent set of interventions would offer more help to teachers, who are at times confused by the conflicting advice coming from these different sources.

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In order to arrive at that ideal scenario, two broad factors, on which this study will comment later, are of particular relevance: supervision visits should collect information relevant to pedagogical improvement, while supervision reports need to be disseminated and acted upon by the different recipients. What is also important are the contacts, both informal and formal, which exist between these services; in other words the involvement of supervisors in, for instance, examination writing, achievement testing or teacher training. The following paragraphs study the nature and extent of these relations.

Botswana

Education officers in the Department of Primary Education (including those based in the field) take part in other pedagogical activities:

- they are members of subject panels responsible for curriculum development;
- they participate in item writing, pre-testing and supervision with regard to examinations;
- pre-service education: they sit on the Advisory Committees of the Colleges of Education, which, among other things, review the colleges' curricula;
- they are members of In-Service Committees, which exist at regional level and on which teachers, headteachers and NGOs are represented.

At secondary level, supervisors are even more deeply involved in other pedagogical support functions: this can be explained by the fact that for a long time SEOs were solely responsible for all aspects of their subjects, and that only recently some tasks have been given to other departments. They retain important duties, for instance as Chief Examiner in their respective subjects.

Namibia

In Namibia, no formal linkages exist between inspectors and/or advisory teachers and other pedagogical improvement services. To give one example:

the examination board has, among its members, the regional directors, representatives from the teachers' union and from universities and other tertiary institutions, but not from the Directorate of the Inspectorate and Advisory Services.

▪ *Tanzania*

Primary-school inspectors are members of curriculum panels and are involved in setting and marking examinations. Their participation in decision-making about in- and pre-service training is informal: they offer advice while visiting schools and the teacher resource centres.

▪ *Zanzibar*

Inspectors are involved in teacher training and curriculum development. In the field of teacher training, they organize some in-service training and, as part of the Department of Professional Services, they sometimes conduct pre-service seminars. They also participate in syllabus preparation and textbook writing. They are, however, not involved in pedagogical research or examinations.

▪ *Zimbabwe*

Education officers - at central as well as other levels - play a critical role in examinations, by writing test items, marking examinations and preparing reports on the way questions have been answered. These reports are then sent to schools. They also have a role to play in curriculum development. The Curriculum Development Unit has formed standing subject panels, on which they are represented. The same officers are also involved in in-service training as Resource Persons in different programmes focused on school improvement. In addition, EOs, posted at district level, are members of the District Development Committee (DDC). This committee co-ordinates programmes of various Ministries and prioritizes development needs of wards in the district.

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The above overview shows very different situations. Relationships between supervision and the other pedagogical services are close and institutionalized in Botswana, supervisors being members of committees and panels in charge of curriculum development, teacher training and examinations. In Zimbabwe, their involvement is less institutionalized, but still quite intense: supervisors serve as resource persons in training and participate in writing test items, marking examinations and preparing evaluation reports. In Namibia, however, the situation tends to the opposite, with no formal contacts and very few informal ones between supervisors and other pedagogical support staff. Supervisors are, for instance, not represented on the examination board, neither will they be on the Regional Education Forum. At the time of writing the national report, this forum was to be set up in each region, in order to promote and monitor educational development. It was to be composed of representatives of school boards, community leaders, church bodies, employers, trade unions, teachers' unions, student organizations and NGOs, but without inspectors or advisory teachers. In Tanzania, in principle, supervisors do sit on curriculum panels and help with examinations, but in practice their involvement in pedagogical improvement is limited, because of the practical constraints on their work.

While the Botswana case seems the most amenable to developing supervision as an integrated component of a pedagogical improvement service, it is not without problems. With the ever increasing number of schools and pressure from within the Ministry and from the public in general for more inspections, SEOs have found the duties they do in co-operation with, or on behalf of, other departments to be an added burden which limits their capacity to supervise schools more effectively. Indeed, it is difficult to argue that supervisors need to widen their co-operation with other school and

teacher-support services, while recognizing at the same time that at present they spend too little time on their priority task: supervision.

This raises a number of questions. Firstly, in which fields should supervisors, as a priority, be involved? The one field which comes closest to their core task, supervision, is undoubtedly in-service training. It could be argued that a good school visit should take the form of an informal training session of school staff. In addition, many recommendations, which conclude visits, relate to the need for such training. Ensuring that supervisors work closely together with other staff in charge of in-service training, might also help in changing the image of the supervisor in a positive way. A second question concerns the nature in which supervisors could be involved in other services. Should it be left to individuals in, for example, their field offices to decide in what area to be involved or should the supervision service, as an institution, ensure that its views and opinions are taken into account? In a similar vein, the choice exists between relying on informal contacts or formal bodies. What is more important than defining answers to these questions, is to ensure that some forms of contact exist between supervisors, teacher trainers, curriculum developers and others, through, as a minimum, the exchange of reports, and, where possible, the organization of team visits.

5. School-site supervision

In all countries, the Ministry of Education has realized that it has become difficult for supervisors, including those posted at decentralized levels, to effectively monitor what goes on in schools and to give consistent support to teachers. The numbers of teachers and schools per supervisor and the poor communications render it nearly impossible for a supervisor to spend enough time in each single school. It is believed moreover that schools need to take more

responsibility for their own performance and quality and that a culture of quality assurance can only be developed through promoting internal school supervision. In view of this, bringing supervision closer to school, either by clustering schools or by devolving some supervision and support tasks to the school site and to the school community, is a general trend everywhere, although to varying degrees. The actual policies indeed differ quite significantly between countries.

Botswana

The aim of the current educational policy is to empower school heads and senior staff to function as instructional leaders. Recommendation 105 of the Revised National Policy on Education reads as follows: *"the Head as instructional leader, together with the deputy and senior teachers, should take major responsibility for in-service training, through regular observation of teachers and organization of workshops (...) the Education Officers' visits to schools should supplement the school-based in-service training"*. In addition, secondary schools are expected to prepare school development plans.

The community is represented in the schools through parent-teacher associations (in primary) and board of governors (in secondary), but their precise role in supervision is left unclear. Grouping schools in clusters with, in some cases, a resource centre in the middle, is a strategy which is increasingly relied upon.

Probably the most significant innovation concerns the creation of Staff Development Co-ordinators, a programme launched in secondary schools in 1996 and which is being introduced at primary level. These co-ordinators work with groups of neighbouring schools and have as main tasks to identify staff development (training) needs and to organize relevant programmes. Most secondary schools have received a small budget for such programmes.

Namibia

Structures for in-school supervision do exist. In large schools, deputies, heads of departments and subject heads assist the principal. In some schools, principals make use of 'guardian' teachers to assist newly appointed teachers. The effectiveness of senior staff and guardians in supervising colleagues differs very much from school to school. School clusters are being set up in some of the regions.

The community is represented through school boards, which are, according to the policy document of the Okahao circuit, *'the officially appointed and recommended governing body'*. The number of parents on this board is equal to that of teachers and, in senior secondary schools, to that of students. In principle a decision-making body, which meets regularly, anecdotal evidence shows that not all these boards are functioning in the different schools.

Tanzania

In Tanzania, communities, officially at least, play a very significant role in supervision. The School Committee is the only organ, other than the PSI, which has mandatory powers by law to supervise implementation of educational policy in the school. Supervision is to be understood mainly as:

- controlling pupils: to see that they are enrolled properly, that they attend regularly and behave correctly;
- ensuring that parents and communities contribute to the school's development;
- ensuring that the school has sufficient material resources.

Some of their tasks are more directly related to pedagogical matters:

- to help the headteacher improve the welfare of the teachers and pupils in the school;
- to advise the headteacher and the local authority on matters relating to the management and conduct of the school;
- to plan the overall development of the school.

Zanzibar

Supervision and support tasks are not devolved to the school or the community, but remain fully controlled by the central Ministry.

Zimbabwe

Responsibility for in-school supervision rests with the school head. However, in large schools, additional structures are being set up: deputy heads and teachers in charge (primary), or heads of department (secondary), play an active role in supervision. The introduction of a performance appraisal system in the public service, including in schools, has led to greater emphasis on in-school supervision. School Suitability Boards, comprising members of the administration and teacher representatives, are expected to assist and advise teachers and to assess their performance, in order to recommend them for bonuses and so on. The DEOs and EOs only play the role of moderator and arbitrator in this exercise.

Communities are becoming more involved in schools, through either School Development Committees (in non-government schools) or School Development Associations (in government schools). Their focus is currently on non-professional matters.

School clustering is not a new concept in Zimbabwe. In the past, schools were grouped together in circuits or zones, but these groupings had mainly administrative purposes, whereas now they also cover professional development matters. Clusters are expected to report regularly to the district office. A growing number of resource centres are also being set up throughout the country.

With the exception of Zanzibar, everywhere different actors at school-site level are being asked to play an increased role in teacher supervision. A central issue is of course who will receive the responsibility to assess and assist teachers. Two, not mutually exclusive, scenarios seem to exist. A first alternative consists of relying on senior staff, with school principals as the main actors, assisted by

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deputies and, at least in secondary schools, department heads. These department heads have the advantage of being subject specialists, which is not the case for principals. In large primary schools in Zimbabwe, heads will be assisted by deputy heads and by teachers in charge, while in Namibia some schools make use of 'guardian teachers' who work with new appointees. In Botswana in particular, senior staff in schools are increasingly being offered training in school management, so that they will be able to play a greater role in supervising and assisting their staff. A second, less common, alternative consists of setting up a separate board within the school, consisting of senior staff and possibly representatives from the administration. This is the case for instance of the School Suitability Boards in Zimbabwe.

A comment is useful here: all countries point out that in reality only the bigger schools are actually implementing a policy of in-school supervision. In general, effective in-school supervision and support is only visible in a small percentage of primary schools. In Kwekwe district, in Zimbabwe, the impact of School Suitability Boards is "felt most in urban schools, where there was less mobility and hence better retention of experienced heads". Indeed, primary schools do not only face problems of size, but also the lack of sufficient experienced staff and a quick turnover of teachers. Therefore, many, not to say most, primary schools continue to operate as before.

A reform strategy, more pertinent to the characteristics of many such schools, consists of creating school clusters, with or without resource centres at their core. These clusters, which are being set up in each of the four countries, aim to share expertise and resources between schools and to strengthen local capacities for in-service training. Where such clusters are functioning well, they are received with enthusiasm by school staff and their potential for improving quality is recognized. The main challenge is to turn what are still

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somewhat isolated projects into an overall policy. Many, if not most, resource centres have been set up on the advice of and with funding by international agencies, as part of donor-funded projects (the situation in Botswana offers, from that point of view, an exception). There is an evident need for stronger co-ordination between the different efforts and, finally, to integrate the school cluster resource centres into an overall supervision policy. Such a policy should respect the original mandate of these centres, without turning them into another administrative level, with the same weaknesses and constraints as, for instance, the district offices.

The devolution of supervision to the local level can also imply an increased reliance on school communities. In all four countries, some structure, representing the community, exists. They carry names such as Parent-Teacher Associations, Boards of Governors or School Development Committees. Their official authorities differ: in Tanzania, the School Committee has quite wide-ranging powers, including in the pedagogical field. In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, School Development Committees or Associations have no explicit supervision or support tasks. In reality, the situation is probably not very different from one country to another, with communities seldom exercising whatever powers they might have in supervision and support. The case study on Kwekwe district in Zimbabwe commented that "communities are only involved in the physical development of schools. Reports on teachers were not discussed with communities and their responsible authorities. Supervisors rarely met communities when visiting schools."

The current policy reforms, however timidly implemented, imply nonetheless a strengthening of in-school and close-to-school supervision. This has, as far as can be deduced from the studies, not yet been accompanied by a reformulation of the roles of external

supervisors. Botswana, as was seen, has created a specific category of teacher-support personnel, the staff development co-ordinators, who help secondary-school staff identify training needs for a group of neighbouring schools. The available information on the four countries points to the need to rethink the overall organization of the supervision services and to re-assign tasks to the different levels and actors, starting from the school itself.

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II. MANAGEMENT OF SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Basic facts and figures

(a) The present profile of school supervisors

This paper has already pointed out that supervisors are burdened with too many schools for them to be able to offer effective supervision of the primary schools within their area of operation. The potential of the supervision system to influence teaching/learning practices in schools is a function of the number of schools to be supervised and the number of teachers to be guided by each supervisor. However, any judgement on the adequacy of supervision depends very much on what is expected from supervisors. Having 15 schools per inspector could be considered manageable, if his or her main role is supposed to be a swift inspection of the school's management and administration. But if a supervisor is expected to offer consistent and continuous support to all teachers, then the ratio of teachers/supervisor is the one to look at: having about 100 teachers per supervisor is probably the upper limit. In other words, any assessment about the numbers of supervisors depends on the role assigned to the service.

Table 5 presents the number of officers in supervision and support compared to the number of teachers and schools, and then calculates the school/supervisor and teacher/supervisor ratios.

Table 5. Numbers of schools, teachers and supervisors, 1997-1998[13]

Country	Posts[14]	Numbers of staff	Numbers of schools	Numbers of teachers	School/ supervisor ratio	Teacher/ supervisor ratio
Botswana	Primary supervisors	35	718	*12,785*	20.5	365
	Secondary supervisors	28	230	*6,214*	8.2	222
	External advisers	67	948	*18,999*	14.1	284
	All officers	130	948	*18,999*	7.3	146
Namibia	Inspectors	50	1,449	16,759	29.0	335
	Advisory teachers	148	1,449	16,759	9.8	113
	All officers	198	1,449	16,759	7.3	85
	Occupied posts	129	1,449	16,759	11.2	130
Tanzania	Primary inspectors	428	*11,151*	*105,916*	26.0	247
Zanzibar	Primary inspectors				14	161
	Secondary inspectors				5	64
Zimbabwe	Primary supervisors	309	4,670	63,900	15.1	207
	Secondary supervisors	156	1,531	29,074	9.8	186

One unknown quantity in this table concerns the number of vacant posts. Only Namibia gave specific information on this issue. While the inspectorate is almost fully staffed (48 of the 50 posts are filled), vacancies are a serious problem for the advisory service. About 40 per cent of the posts (67 out of 148) were unfilled in November 1997. In Ondangwa West for instance, only eight out of 23 posts are filled. The total number of teachers to be reached by these advisory teachers is 4,079, more than 500 per occupied post, rather than 180 when all posts would have been filled. In Botswana, it seems that two posts have been left vacant, as there are 37 inspectoral areas at primary level and only 35 inspectors.

13. *Data* in italics are taken from the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook and concern 1996 (for Botswana) and 1997 (for Tanzania). For Tanzania, the *data* had to be computed on the basis of the information available in the UNESCO Yearbook (which concerns the United Republic) and deducting *data* obtained separately for Zanzibar. For Zanzibar, the national report contains only the ratios, not the raw numbers.
14. As identified under *Chapter I.2.*

It is difficult to compare between countries: officers do not have the same job description, and, in two countries, Namibia and Botswana, the role played by specialized advisory staff, who cover both primary and secondary schools, needs to be taken into consideration. This notwithstanding, a few points can be noted:

- Primary inspectors have to supervise, on average, 15 schools in Zanzibar and Zimbabwe, 20 in Botswana, 26 in Tanzania and 29 in Namibia. The number of teachers varies from just over 160 in Zanzibar, 200 in Zimbabwe and 250 in Tanzania, to 335 in Namibia and 365 in Botswana. However, in these last two countries inspectors can count on 'advisers' to help them.

- At secondary level, there is little difference between Botswana and Zimbabwe: a supervisor is, on average, in charge of about 10 schools and 200 teachers. Zanzibar is in a much better position: a supervisor oversees 5 schools only and 64 teachers. However, these figures are misleading as, at this level, supervisors work by subject. One should therefore examine the charge of specific-subject staff. This was done in Zimbabwe and we can note for instance that there are 14 English subject officers for 4,058 teachers in that subject (a ratio of 290 teachers per officer), 11 mathematics officers for 3,490 teachers (a ratio of 317) and 12 Science officers for 3954 teachers (a ratio of 330 teachers).

There exists also quite detailed information by region (understandably this is not the case for Zanzibar). In some countries, this information is available in the Ministry of Education as part of the 'normal' data on education, but in others (Namibia, for example) a special data collection exercise had to be undertaken. We were able to compare the presence of supervisors between regions for three countries. *Table 6* gives some details.

Table 6. Disparities in supervisors' posting by region[15]

	School/supervisor ratio			Teacher/supervisor ratio		
	Average	Lowest	Highest	Average	Lowest	Highest
Botswana	20.5	17.5	22	Not available		
Namibia	30.2	18.0	43.6	349	220	510
Zimbabwe	15.1	8.2	18.2	207	194	240

Interpreting these data, especially school/supervisor ratios, to draw conclusions about regional disparities, needs to be done with care. We do not know the density of the school network, the transport possibilities or the differences in school size. It is more useful to look at teacher/supervisor ratios, although care is still warranted. The differences in Namibia are striking. The ratios vary from 220 teachers per supervisor (Rundu) to 510 (Ondangwa West). In this last region, supervisors also have the highest number of schools under their charge. Windhoek, the capital region, not surprisingly has the lowest number of schools per supervisor, but still more than the average number of teachers. In Zimbabwe, the differences are smaller: the average number of teachers per supervisor varies from 194 to 240.

In addition, we should remember that differences can also exist within offices, as a result of the criteria used for distributing schools between officers. This can be on the basis of the number of schools, but the main criterion can also be geographic-administrative, each officer being assigned one or more administrative sub-divisions, which form a geographic entity. The information on the Central region in Botswana, although not very detailed, shows the existence of differences within an office: two inspectors oversee between 10 and 19 schools, another two between 20 and 29 schools. However,

15. Note that for Botswana existing posts were used rather than occupied posts, while the opposite is the case for Namibia, which explains the difference with *Table 5*.

all four have between 300 and 350 teachers. In the Kwekwe district in Zimbabwe, each DEO is responsible for 22 or 23 schools. The number of teachers under their charge varies between 266 in the rural circuits with smaller schools and 455 in the one urban circuit. A similar situation exists for secondary schools, with the school/ supervisor ratio ranging between 6 and 10 and the teacher/supervisor ratio between 94 and 282.

The following points emerge from the above paragraphs:

- The number of schools and teachers for which supervisors are responsible, seem, at first sight, manageable, with a school/ supervisor ratio varying from 15 to 30. Much depends however on the supervision and support these officers are expected to give to schools and on their working conditions. For instance, if supervisors are supposed to have consistent and regular contacts with schools, and if the distance between schools and the scarcity of transport renders travelling arduous and time-consuming, the present number of schools is too high. If, on the contrary, the main task of a supervisor is to inspect a school once a term, and travelling and working conditions are not constraining, then the ratio can be considered acceptable.

- Differences in workload between regions and/or districts and between officers within districts can be fairly great. Some of these are not surprising, with urban staff having to oversee more teachers than rural staff, who experience more transport problems and work with smaller schools. It is fairly clear however that one criterion, which could have been used in the distribution of schools between offices, namely the school's need for more or less supervision, is not taken into account. The distribution remains done on an administrative basis, the underlying assumption being that all schools without distinction need similar supervision. The

actual number of staff would be sufficient, if this staff were well equipped (especially with transport) and if these officers would focus their attention on the most needy schools.

(b) Profile of supervisory officers

The five countries did not collect exactly the same data on the supervisors. But what is available offers a general impression of the profile of the "typical" school supervisor. We will at the end of this rather dry overview discuss some of its implications. The following is an overview of the data collected.

(i) By age

Many primary-school supervisors come close to the end of their career (see *Table 7* and *Figure 2*): in Tanzania and Zimbabwe about two-thirds are over 50, and in Namibia more than half. None of the Tanzanian supervisors are under 40. In Botswana and Zanzibar, inspectors have a distinctly younger profile: about half are in their 40s and one-sixth in their 30s.

Secondary supervisors in Botswana and Zimbabwe are, on the whole, younger (see *Table 8* and *Figure 3*): in Botswana, only one out of a total of 28 is over 50, and in Zimbabwe this is true for only about one-third of the total staff of 156. External advisers have a still younger age profile (see *Table 9* and *Figure 4*): in Botswana, a large majority is under 40, in Namibia only about 20 per cent is over 50. We will come back later to the reasons for these differences in profile.

Table 7. Primary supervisors by age[16]

Age	Botswana	Namibia	Tanzania	Zanzibar	Zimbabwe
30-39	6	6	0	5	7
41-49	17	21	160	18	75
50+	12	21	268	9	227
Total	35	48	428	32	309

Figure 2. Age of primary-school supervisors

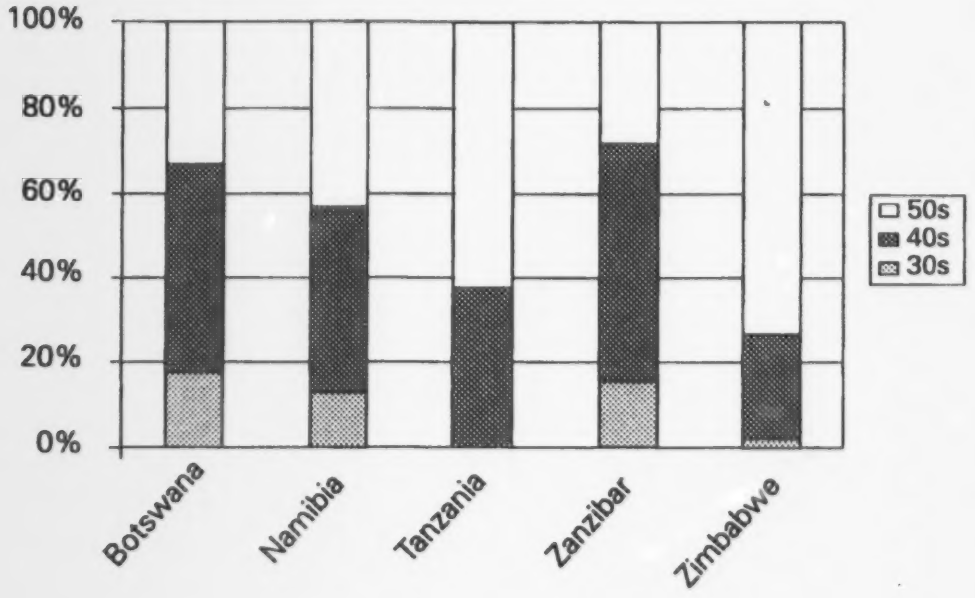

Table 8. Secondary supervisors by age

Age	Botswana	Zimbabwe
30-39	13	6
41-49	14	96
50 +	1	54
Total	28	156

16. The table concerns, for Namibia, all supervisors as they are responsible for both primary and secondary schools, and, for Zanzibar, all supervisors (primary and secondary) and advisory teachers.

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Figure 3. Age of secondary-school supervisors

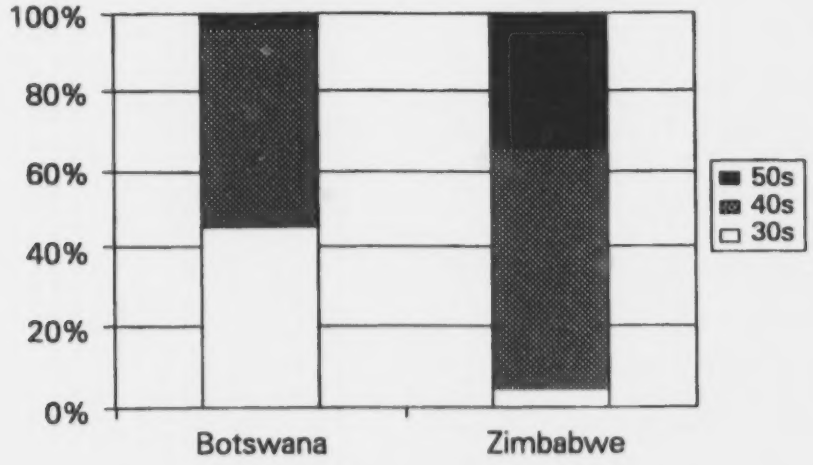
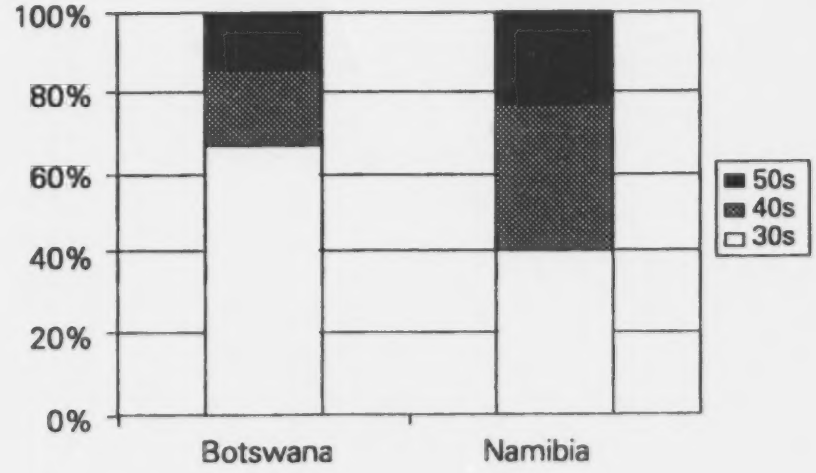


Table 9. External advisers by age

Age	Botswana	Namibia
30-39	46	33
41-49	12	30
50+	9	18
Total	67	81

Figure 4. Age of external advisers



(ii) By length of service

In view of the data on age, it is not surprising to see that primary supervisors have many years of experience within the education sector (*Table 11* and *Figure 6*). For the four countries on which we have data, almost all staff have a career of 20 or more years to look back upon. Only in Namibia is there a sizeable group, about one quarter, with less, which is not unexpected in view of the need which was felt – with independence in 1990 – to renew at least a part of the supervisory corps. This is confirmed by further data on Namibia (*Table 10* and *Figure 5*) relating to experience in supervision. This shows that much of their experience was probably spent in schools, as few supervisors have been in supervision for over 15 years. The same is true for Botswana. Secondary-school supervisors in Zimbabwe have a similar number of years of experience as their colleagues for primary (*Table 12*). In Botswana, where the secondary-school supervisory corps was relatively recently created, most staff have less than 10 years' experience. External advisers have, on the whole, less experience in their present occupation (*Table 13* and *Figure 7*). This can easily be explained by the fact that many of these posts were only recently created.

As an illustration, some data can be added here on the situation of particular district offices. In the Kwekwe district in Zimbabwe, all primary-school supervision staff had wide and relevant experience: they had served as classroom practitioners for an average of 13 years, as heads of primary schools for an average of 10 years and as supervisors for about eight years. In the Ondangwa West region, in Namibia, the inspectors were on average 54 years of age; had nine years of experience as a teacher, 10 years as a headteacher and six as a supervisor. The average age of advisory teachers was only 36; they had about eight years of teaching, two years of head-teaching and two years of advisory teaching experience.

Table 10. Primary supervisors by length of service (as supervisor)

Years	Botswana	Namibia
0-9	25	32
10-19	10	13
20 and over	0	3
Total	35	48

Figure 5. Experience in supervision of primary-school supervisors

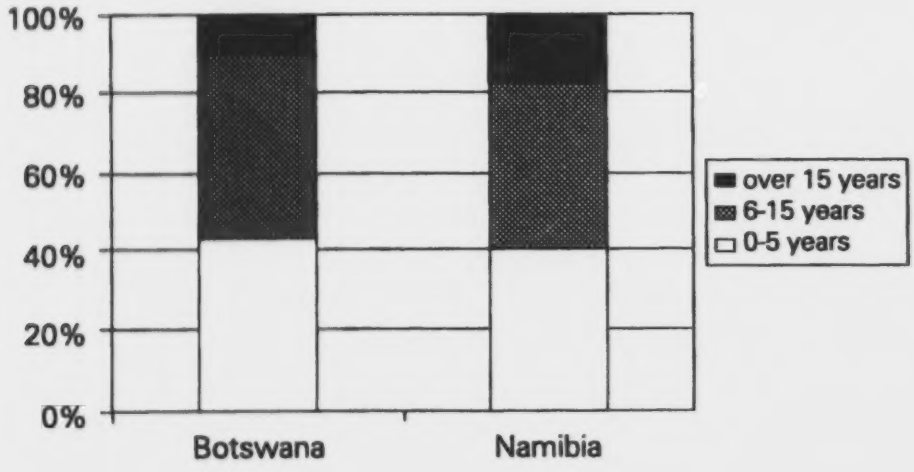


Table 11. Primary supervisors by total length of service

Years	Namibia	Tanzania	Zanzibar[17]	Zimbabwe
0-9	2	0	1	1
10-19	12	11	4	24
20-29	21	330	23	119
30 and over	13	87	4	165
Total	48	428	32	309

17. Includes all supervisors (primary and secondary) and advisory teachers.

Figure 6. Years of experience of primary-school supervisors

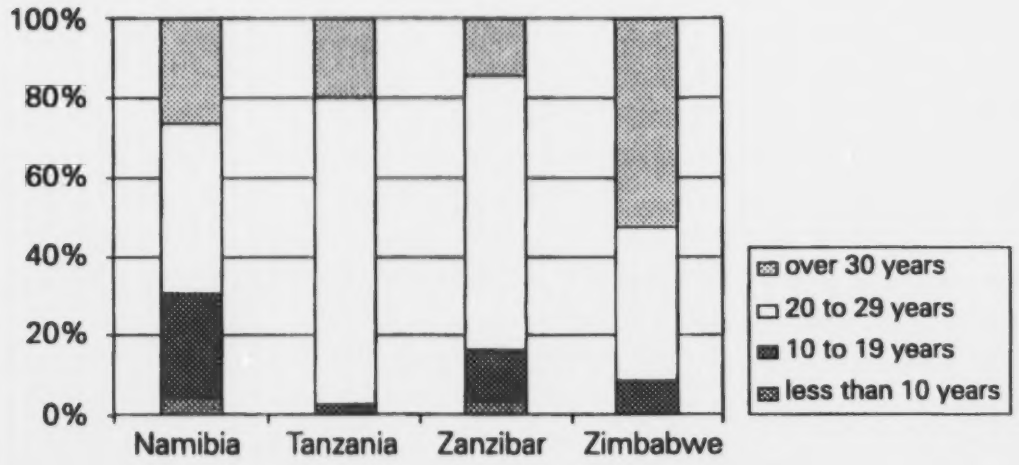


Table 12. Secondary supervisors by length of service[18]

Years	Botswana	Zimbabwe
0-9	25	0
10-19	3	21
20-29	0	106
30 and over	0	29
Total	28	48

Table 13. External advisers by length of service[19]

Years	Botswana	Namibia	Namibia
0-9	64	7	63
10-19	3	36	16
20-29	0	26	2
30 and over	0	12	0
Total	67	81	81

18. For Botswana: length of service as supervisor; for Zimbabwe: total length of service.
19. For Botswana: length of service as external adviser; for Namibia: first column: total length of service; second column: length of service as external adviser.

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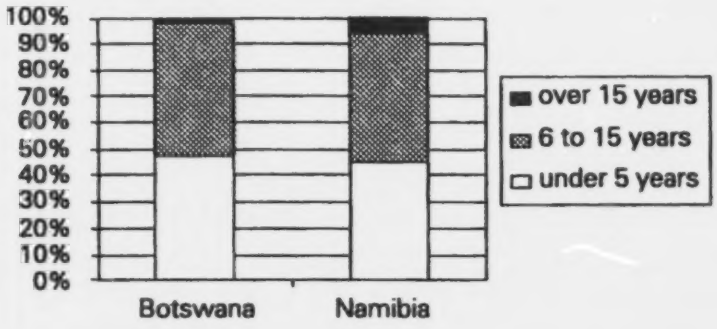
Figure 7. Years of experience of external advisers



(iii) By qualifications

Comparisons on qualifications are difficult to make because of the different types of degrees. One point, however, is clear: there is quite a wide difference between countries (see *Table 14* and *Figure 8*), which is linked to three factors: their overall social and educational development and the ensuing availability of graduates; the recruitment criteria (a point to which we will come back later); and the attractiveness of the profession itself. In Botswana and Namibia, the pool of university graduates is rather vast and the profession of primary-school supervisor remains rather attractive. As a result, only a small group of primary supervisors did not obtain a university degree (a B. Ed. or more). In Tanzania, only two out of 428 have obtained a first degree, while 312 have only an 'O' level or less. The situation of Zanzibar is slightly better than that of Tanzania, but this might be because the data take into consideration all supervisors rather than just primary. In Zimbabwe, less than half have a B. Ed. or above, but all have at least a certificate.

Both secondary supervisors and advisers have quite impressive academic records (see *Tables 15* and *16*). The attractiveness and prestige of the job (partly because of the motivating working conditions), the fairly strict recruitment criteria and the fact that much of this staff is young are all explanatory factors.

Table 14. Primary supervisors by qualifications[20]

Qualification	Botswana	Namibia	Tanzania	Zanzibar	Zimbabwe
Certificate or less	2	12	312	6	159
Diploma	10	10	114	16	16
B. Ed.	19	21	2	4	129
M. Ed. or higher	4	5	0	6	5
Total	35	48	428	32	309

Figure 8. Primary supervisors by qualification

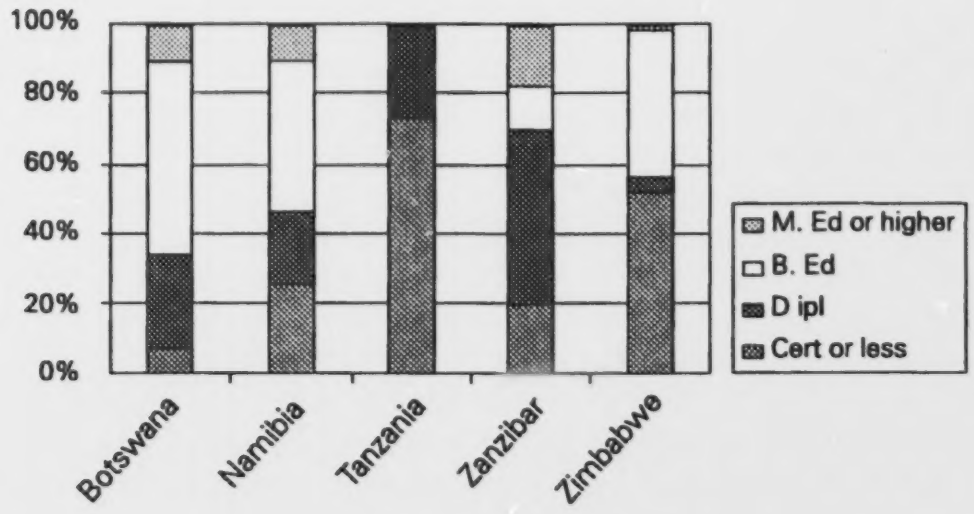


Table 15. Secondary supervisors by qualifications

Qualifications	Botswana	Zimbabwe
Diploma or equivalent	2	5
B. Ed. or equivalent	13	151
M. Ed or equivalent	13	
Total	28	156

20. The nomenclature regarding qualifications differs from country to country. More detailed data can be found in the national reports.

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Table 16. External advisers by qualifications

Qualification	Botswana	Namibia
Certificate or equivalent	10	9
Diploma or equivalent	5	8
B. Ed. or equivalent	26	52
M. Ed or equivalent	26	12
Total	67	81

(iv) By gender

For all categories of staff and in all countries, supervisory staff are predominantly male, the only exception being advisers in Botswana (*Figure 9* and *Table 17*. Women are especially badly represented amongst inspectors in Namibia (about 7 per cent) and Zimbabwe (about 9 per cent), compared to 50-60 per cent in Botswana. It is useful to compare this to the percentage of women in the teaching profession (*Table 18*), which shows a discrepancy, with women a majority, or close to a majority, among teachers but much less represented among supervisors. Undoubtedly, the poorer qualifications of women play a role, as does their own reluctance to apply for such jobs, but it also seems that, in education as elsewhere in society, women encounter a glass ceiling where jobs which carry power and authority are concerned.

Figure 9. Supervision and advisory staff by gender

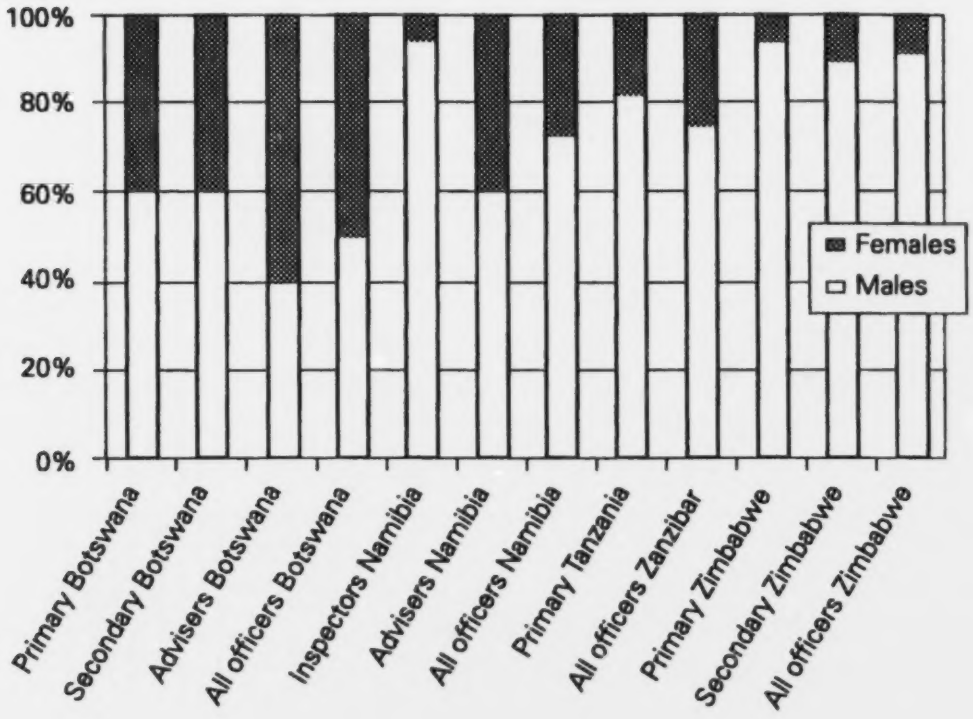

Table 17. Supervisory and advisory staff by gender

Country	Post	Total	Males	%	Females	%
Botswana	Primary supervisors	35	21	60.0	14	40.0
	Secondary supervisors	28	17	60.7	11	39.3
	External advisers	67	27	40.3	40	59.7
	All officers	130	65	50.0	65	50.0
Namibia	Inspectors	48	45	93.8	3	6.3
	Advisory teachers	81	49	60.5	32	39.5
	All officers	129	94	72.9	35	27.1
Tanzania	Primary inspectors	428	352	82.2	76	17.8
Zanzibar	All supervisors	32	24	75.0	8	25.0
Zimbabwe	Primary supervisors	309	288	93.2	21	6.8
	Secondary supervisors	156	140	89.7	16	10.3
	All officers	465	428	92.0	37	8.0

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Table 18. Share of women among supervisors and teachers

Country	Primary		Secondary	
	Teachers	Supervisors	Teachers	Supervisors
Botswana	77%	40%	43%	39%
Tanzania and Zanzibar	44%	18%		
Zimbabwe	44%	7%	36%	10%

The typical primary-school supervisor is a man with a lot of experience, who has made his career in the education service, first as a teacher, then as a headteacher, to become finally a supervisor. Such wide experience makes up for what is, in many cases, a lack of academic qualifications. The question must be asked if this is the most appropriate profile when we think of the supervisor as a collegial innovator, someone who will spread examples of good practice between schools, or if this profile is more adapted to the concept of a control-oriented supervisor, who puts reliance on his administrative authority. A related question is: does this profile need to be changed, through, for instance, reforming the recruitment rules and regulations. The comparison with the profiles of secondary-school supervisors and advisory teachers is quite instructive: they are generally younger, therefore with less experience (especially as a headteacher) but with higher qualifications. Two factors explain this difference: recruitment rules coupled with the relatively recent creation of these posts.

2. Critical management issues

The effectiveness with which supervisors perform their duties, depends not simply on their own competence and their profile, but very much on the ways in which their profession is being managed by the national authorities. Management implies aspects such as: recruitment rules and career development opportunities; the training

and support of which supervisors can benefit; and the ways in which they are being monitored and evaluated.

(a) Recruitment

Table 19 summarizes the recruitment procedures and the requirements, in terms of qualifications and experience, for each country.

Table 19. Recruitment procedures and criteria

	Procedure	Criteria	
		Qualifications	Experience
Botswana (primary)	Open advertisement and interview	Diploma	Successful primary-school head for 3 or more years
Botswana (secondary)	Open advertisement and interview	Diploma and teaching qualification	8 years' teaching experience and senior position in school
Namibia	Open advertisement and interview	BETD + 3 years additional degree + 3 years experience or BETD + 12 years experience	
Tanzania	No standard procedures; identification, sometimes interview	Diploma	5 years' teaching experience and outstanding performance
Zanzibar	Promotion decided by Ministry of Education		Teaching experience
Zimbabwe	Vacancy circular, shortlist, and interview	B. Ed.	Practising head or lecturer (at teacher-training colleges)

While examining these procedures and criteria, and looking at the same time at the actual practices, five issues come to the fore.

Recruitment criteria need to be clear and transparent. In Tanzania, the lack of unambiguous official criteria guiding the selection of

candidates is a problem. Moreover, appointees are not always consulted to find out if they are interested in the post of inspector. This situation can give rise to favouritism and consequently the appointment of less competent and less motivated candidates. Practising inspectors themselves deplore the present situation and those in the Muheza district suggested different improvements, including advertising the posts to allow competent and committed teachers to apply and making the selection criteria transparent. In the other countries, criteria are clear and the information available in the case studies in Botswana and Zimbabwe confirms that these official procedures are indeed respected.

A second issue concerns the definition of criteria and in particular the relative emphasis placed on experience and academic qualifications. Several countries (Namibia, Zanzibar) do not expect an applicant for a post as inspector to have experience as a headteacher. In Botswana, the same is true for a secondary-school supervisor, who only needs to have occupied a senior position in school. The result seems that, once SEOs are recruited from amongst senior teachers, they are often disrespected by school heads, who consider them to be their juniors. The fact that some supervisors are occupying a post with a lower grade than secondary principals, aggravates the issue. This problem does not exist at primary level in Botswana, where all supervisors have had to be successful primary-school heads. On the other hand, the EOs interviewed in the Central region are concerned about the qualifications required and feel that there is a need to recruit individuals with at least a degree. This, however, could well make it more difficult to attract people with sufficient primary teaching background, as these do not necessarily have high academic degrees. Tanzania, where in 1997 the minimum qualification was upgraded from 'O' level to Diploma, might face a similar dilemma in the future. The choice between 'qualifications'

and 'experience' needs to be guided both by a vision of the expected role of the supervisors, but also by the need for them to be accepted and respected by school staff. In the longer term, that choice will become less and less of a dilemma, with the increased qualifications of the whole population.

A third issue is that of age: while the official regulations in general do not demand experience in schools of more than 10 or 12 years, most supervisors can look back on a much longer career in education. Maybe the present regulations imply somewhat that promotion to the post of inspector is a reward for a successful career in schools, rather than a recognition of particular capacities.

Another concern is with the low number of female applicants. In various countries, females tend not to apply much, because of the long distances they have to travel to visit schools and the prolonged absences from the family. Zimbabwe, which is faced with this issue, requires heads of offices to write individually to qualified women inviting them to apply.

Finally, it is not clear in how far competence or excellence in the previous job plays more than an informal role in the recruitment procedures. One exception is the Botswana in-service officer, who is recruited on the basis of exemplary classroom practice. A useful selection criterion, in the case of supervisors, could be successful performance as a teacher and as a headteacher. This of course raises the delicate issue of how to interpret and assess 'excellence' and who will be the judge.

(b) Career development

Promotion possibilities in all four countries are limited, due to the pyramidal structure. In most cases, the post of supervisor, either

at primary or secondary level, is the last post in an officer's career. In the rare cases where promotion is possible, it will lead to a post outside of supervision.

There are some specificities in each country. In Botswana, the decentralization process has brought about some change by enabling more movement within the service. Senior staff in secondary schools can be promoted to supervisors without having experience as headteacher. However, as supervisors, they will then be on a lower grade and salary scale than some secondary principals, a position which renders their inspection job very difficult. Tanzania has one specificity: supervisory officers belong to the same cadre as teachers. As such, there are no differences in conditions of service, salary structure or other benefits. This also implies that some teachers can be of a higher grade than their inspecting officers, a situation similar to that of secondary supervisors in Botswana. In Zimbabwe, the main step up the career ladder for a DEO is to become an EO. However, for this they should be university graduates, and the number of EO posts is limited: 68, as compared to 241 DEOs, who are not the only possible candidates. On the whole, therefore, promotion possibilities, especially within the field of supervision and support, are scarce.

(c) Training

The need for more and better training – both at the beginning and during their career – is a recurring demand of supervisors in the Eastern and Southern African region. The following paragraphs give an overview of the situation in each country.

In *Botswana*, at primary level, there is no specific plan for in-service training, while only recently some induction training has been taking place. The national report mentions that, of the 35 persons concerned, 24 received no formal training whatsoever, six benefited from a two-week training course and the

remaining five went on a three-month course in the UK. The case study on the Central region paints a somewhat different picture. All four inspectors – but not the REO – had received a short (one or two weeks) induction training. Three of these five had also participated in some in-service training. All, however, felt the need for a longer induction period (with more attention to issues such as management, handling cases of misconduct, confidence building and inspection procedures) and for more regular in-service courses, linked to reforms and innovations in the education system and to specific supervision issues, such as report writing, counselling and teacher appraisal.

At secondary level, while no formal training programme exists, some more informal staff development occurs, usually consisting of:

- a short attachment at headquarters;
- briefing by the PEO and distribution of guidelines and checklists;
- attachment to a 'mentor' for the first few inspection visits.

An annual evaluation and planning workshop of all secondary supervisors acts as a forum for presentation of professional papers, discussion and exchange.

In-service EOs and staff development co-ordinators benefit from more continuous and structured training. Newly recruited officers go through an intensive induction-training programme. The in-service education officer in the Central region, for instance, had benefited from such a programme and from an 18-months in-service course.

Induction training in ***Namibia*** is almost non-existent for both inspectors and advisers. In a few cases, a type of 'mentor' system can be found whereby experienced supervisors accompany new recruits. The Ministry has organized about five in-service training courses over the last seven years, in which all inspectors took part. However, there was little co-ordination and continuity between these courses.

The situation is no different in ***Tanzania***. In principle, all new recruits should follow a three-month induction course and be supervised during a probationary

period of six months. However, owing to the lack of funds, such training has not taken place on a systematic basis and its frequency has decreased dramatically over recent years. Furthermore, the probation period is not well supervised because of the lack of appraisal criteria. Some in-service courses are organized from time to time, but very few have taken place recently. In Muheza district, 13 of the 18 staff interviewed had not benefited from any training during the last three years. The remainder had taken part in seminars and workshops lasting between one and three weeks, on very specific subjects such as Primary School Leaving Examinations and Evaluation of Adult Education.

In ***Zanzibar***, different in-service training opportunities exist, and all 32 supervisors and advisers have received some in-service training. However, this training does not form part of a continued staff development programme. The absence of learning facilities and resource materials makes it difficult for supervisors to upgrade their knowledge.

In ***Zimbabwe***, the Ministry in principle organizes a one-week induction training course which all supervisors attend. The regional office adds to this the more informal type of attachment to an experienced supervisor. The one-week training includes a field component where participants enter schools, make observations and prepare written reports. In Kwekwe district, three of the six supervisors had not had the opportunity to take part in this formal induction course. The other three had, soon after their appointment, followed courses ranging from two to five weeks, considered as useful. All six however had, in their district office, started in the first two to three weeks by accompanying experienced staff.

In-service training is being organized on an ongoing basis. Five of the Kwekwe supervisors however commented that they had not attended an in-service course, with a specific supervision focus, in the last three years. They have taken part in other in-service training, for instance on the Staff Performance Appraisal system and on school management for primary headteachers.

The overall impression gained from the national and regional studies is preoccupying: on the one hand, an insufficiency of induction and in-service training, coupled with worries about its relevance and quality; and, on the other hand, arguably more crucially, the absence of a coherent and motivating professional development programme. Let us look at each of these points consecutively.

A formal induction training programme exists in Botswana and Zimbabwe and used to exist in Tanzania, until budget cuts led to its virtual disappearance. Even in the first two countries, not every newly appointed supervisor attends these courses. Almost everywhere, however, decentralized offices have put in place some mentor system, whereby a new recruit accompanies a more experienced supervisor for a few weeks. Such training is considered by the supervisors to be both useful and cost-effective. It could be argued that the best training is offered by the practitioners themselves, but it could also be true that such training leads to a reproduction of existing practices and leaves little opportunity for a renewed vision.

While a number of in-service training courses take place, they are not integrated within an overall capacity-building programme, neither do they focus sufficiently on supervision issues. Many of those are ad-hoc affairs, related to the implementation of a particular project. Supervisors ask for more training, but especially for a better-organized programme with a more relevant content. At the same time, budgetary constraints have been especially hard on training, the result being that a significant number of staff have not had the opportunity recently to attend any courses.

The impact of much of this capacity building is limited because of the almost complete absence of training manuals and because no corresponding training is given to support staff or school heads. Efforts have been under way to develop, at regional level, such

materials, with assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Not in one country can one speak of a comprehensive professional development programme which integrates training of different types, with the provision of manuals, supportive evaluation of supervisors and career development.

(d) Support

Supervisors need a motivating working environment. Regular training is one aspect, enjoyable working conditions is another. Not unimportant is the availability of a number of instruments, such as manuals and guidelines, which help them to fulfil their tasks effectively and breaks to some extent the feeling of isolation. In all four countries, some instruments are available, but few go beyond the rather administrative forms and circulars. In addition, the regional case studies showed that not all field staff members have these materials at their disposal. There is a risk in having too many or too precise standard report forms and/or circulars, namely that supervisors are put in a straitjacket, which allows for little creativity. That risk however does not yet occur in any of the four countries, where the support materials available to supervisors are scarce and not integrated into an overall framework.

In ***Botswana***, guidelines and checklists for the conduct of supervision visits exist on computer and are made available to inspectors before visits. All inspectors in the Central region follow these guidelines closely. The in-service officer does her job without this instrument. In ***Namibia***, a few standard report forms exist, but not all inspectors in Ondangwa West are aware of their existence and therefore do not use them. Recently draft guidelines have been written for advisory teachers, but again almost two-thirds of them in Ondangwa West did not receive them and perform their job according to what they consider best practice. There is no supervisors' manual, neither a code of conduct. The Ministry has prepared a draft guide for school management, containing the official rules

and regulations, and the development of a Performance Management System, to be introduced, will provide support to inspectors on how to monitor, supervise and support teaching staff.

In ***Tanzania***, an inspectors' handbook and agreed reporting formats are at hand. There is one code of conduct for all staff, including teachers and the different EOs. The total absence of support instruments to supervisors in *Zanzibar* is decried. In ***Zimbabwe***, a circular on reporting guidelines and formats for different types of visits is made available to all supervisors after their appointment. The field research in Kwekwe showed that these are relied upon for report writing. However, the directive by regions that reports be presented in narrative form somewhat undermines the objectives of these instruments. The result is that EOs and DEOs spend much time writing reports, leading to delays in reporting and in feedback on school visits.

Supervisors could find additional support from meeting and discussing with their colleagues through professional organizations. No such organization exists in Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania or Zanzibar. There has been a demand in Botswana for the constitution of a body to enable more interaction between officers. In Zimbabwe, the National Association of Education Officers is a sub-body of the officially recognized Zimbabwe Teachers' Association.

(e) Monitoring and evaluation

A first question, when discussing monitoring, concerns the identity and position of the person who does the monitoring. In principle, in all four countries, supervisory officers are monitored by their superior officers. In Botswana, for instance, Principal Education Officers were recently appointed to monitor and provide direction and leadership to supervisors. In Tanzania, however, the situation is somewhat more complicated, as the PSIs working at district level are technically accountable to the District Executive

Director, who is accountable to Local Government and thus to the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry of Education is not involved in that process. However, the Chief Inspector of Schools and the Zonal Chief Inspectors do evaluate PSIs on a number of professional matters.

Probably more important is a second question: how (through which process) and on what basis (which criteria/indicators) is staff performance assessed? The following paragraphs examine these issues in the four countries.

In ***Botswana***, confidential reports are produced on all officers working in the public service. addition, all supervisors are expected to prepare monthly itineraries for approval by the Regional Education Officer (REO). Assessment by the REO will take into account, in respect of these itineraries, the number of visits made, the quality of reports made and, according to the Central region case study, other contributions such as how well they handle cases of teacher misconduct, their interest in the general welfare of teachers and how they support their schools to get supplies from the local authority. Staff in the in-service department have a more explicit monitoring system: targets are set within each office, performance indicators are defined and officers prepare an activity report at the end of every school term. The in-service officer in the Central region, however, mentioned that so far she had never been appraised.

Namibia uses similar approaches: supervisors set certain goals and objectives at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year, discussions will be held to see in how far they have been achieved. Supervisors also fill out a monthly return of activities. The Directorate Inspectorate and Advisory Services have compiled a set of performance indicators, to be used once a Performance Management System will be functioning. At the time of writing of the national report, these indicators were not yet in use. What is hindering the monitoring process in Namibia is the lack of a code of conduct or a guidebook, or even a job description.

In ***Tanzania***, the chief inspectors assess the primary-school inspectors on the basis of the number of schools inspected and the number of workshops and seminars attended. They use these to prepare confidential reports on staff, which are used for promotion purposes.

In ***Zanzibar***, the Head of Department, to whom the supervisors are accountable, uses a number of performance indicators: the number of teachers inspected and schools visited, the in-service training given to teachers, the guidelines and handouts prepared by the supervisors.

In ***Zimbabwe***, there seems to be no formal or well-organized mechanism for monitoring EOs' performance in the field. Officers are asked to prepare a programme of activities for the coming year, with targets in terms of school visits, supervision reports and staff development programmes. They will then provide regular progress reports and a consolidated annual report. Depending on the office, other performance indicators will be taken into consideration. In some cases, reference will be made to their core duties, as mentioned in the job description, or to the examination results of the schools under their supervision.

Supervisors, as in many other countries, are assessed mainly on the basis of the quantity of their work: the number of visits made and the number of reports written. However, and this is a positive development, some stress is being put on a few other factors which give a more complete view of their performance, e.g. their handling of teacher misconduct (in Botswana) and the guidelines they prepare (in Zanzibar).

Evaluation is becoming more of a participatory activity than one imposed from outside by the superior. Indeed, in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe, supervisors are evaluated by comparing their actual performance to plans and objectives, which they themselves defined at the beginning of the year. On the other hand, several officers in

different countries stress the need for more transparency and more specific guidelines, in order to allow less room for subjectivity and nepotism.

Finally, the ideal assessment criterion for a supervisor relates undoubtedly to the impact their visits and activities have on schools' achievement. For well-known reasons (the difficulty to assess the part supervision plays in school improvement), few countries anywhere in the world rely on this indicator. It is therefore pleasant to note that in one country, Zimbabwe, some reference is made to the examination results of schools to judge the performance of a supervisor.

3. Budgetary and financial matters

(a) Salaries and allowances[21]

The following paragraphs describe for each country, firstly, the present situation with regard to salaries and allowances and, secondly, the opinions of the staff who were interviewed in the framework of the regional case studies.

In *Botswana*, salaries are reasonably attractive and are comparable to those for other public servants. The salary structure, however, is such that some supervisors, especially at secondary, are paid less than secondary-school heads. All primary-education officers, although on a lower grade than heads or deputy heads of both junior secondary and secondary schools, are paid more than those of primary schools. The office or the department meets travel and accommodation costs. In principle, officers use official vehicles. They can claim mileage for using their own car (of P1.51 and P0.93 per kilometre on gravel and

21. Exchange rates, in February 1998, at the moment of the data collection on this part, were as follows: US$1 = Botswana P3.82 = Namibia $4.92 = Tanzania Sh627.95 = Zimbabwe $17.

tar roads, respectively). Accommodation costs are met through a travel advance, made available to the officer (called in Botswana 'imprest'). When not staying in hotels, officers receive a subsistence allowance of P75 per night. These allowances are paid regularly.

With the exception of the REO, all other interviewed officers considered their salaries too low and claim that they are paid less than comparable staff in other Ministries. Opinions about allowances were mixed, half considering them *good* or *fair* and the other half finding them *poor*. Submitting travel claims can also be a problem, especially for the one officer who is based at some 116 km from the regional office.

The salaries of education personnel changed dramatically in ***Namibia*** in 1996, when a revision led, in many cases, to their doubling. As a result, they presently compare favourably with jobs outside education and in the private sector. *Table 20* shows the salaries earned by different officers, with three years' experience. While the differences between teachers and heads of schools are rather wide, those between heads and inspectors are minor. Supervisors in general do not have an additional income, although in some rural areas they might have small farming projects or shops.

Table 20. Namibia: annual salaries (1997) of officers with comparable experience

Officers	Salaries (in Namibia $)
Senior Education Officer	119,232
Principal Secondary School Inspector of Education	111,414
Principal Primary School Principal Junior Secondary School Advisory Teacher	102,225
Head of Department	96,945
Graduate Teacher	60,000

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Travel and accommodation allowances are paid regularly: the government pays accommodation costs in full and meals are paid to a maximum of N$70 per day. If supervisors decide to arrange private accommodation and meals, they receive N$70 per day.

The advisory teachers interviewed in Ondangwa West are unhappy both with their salaries and the allowances. Seven of the 11 interviewed consider their salaries *very poor* or *poor*, three thought them *fair* while one considers them *good* and none *very good*. Their dissatisfaction with allowances is still greater: nine rate them as *very poor*, two as *poor*. Different problems render the situation unsatisfactory in their eyes. Several are not paid according to the post they are in; this is especially true for teachers, who are seconded to be advisory teachers. Most are not receiving any additional payments when working on Sundays and public holidays. Sometimes, they run workshops and travel long distances, without receiving allowances. When a claim is made after the work has been done, most affirm that they never receive the allowances.

In ***Tanzania***, as mentioned above, inspectors are considered part of the teaching profession, they receive the same travel and accommodation allowances as other staff and do not have a special salary structure. The Daily Subsistence Allowance ranges from US$12.5 to US$33.3. However, recently, as a result of the financial crisis, the budget for allowances is seldom sufficient for supervisors to travel regularly or to the more remote schools. This has had a very detrimental impact on their work, with many officers, in the zonal as well as the district offices, spending more time in front of their desks than in the field.

Supervisors who were interviewed during the case study all considered their salaries unattractive and inadequate, but noted that they were paid on time. In principle, the rates of allowances for travel and subsistence are fair, but these official regulations are seldom respected, in the sense that the necessary funds are just not made available. Sixteen out of eighteen respondents pointed out that funds have not been released since 1995, which has made it almost impossible for them to travel, a fact particularly deplorable for inspectors.

In ***Zanzibar***, the salaries of supervisors are based on qualifications and working experience. There is no financial incentive according to level of responsibility or performance, and their salaries are comparable to those of other public servants. Supervisors do not have any additional sources of income. No special travel allowances are given, although given the small size of the island, this might not pose as big a problem as elsewhere.

Following a job evaluation exercise in 1995 in ***Zimbabwe***, Ministry of Education salaries increased by some 30 per cent in July 1997. The exercise had indeed shown salaries of civil servants to be significantly lower than those of employees of private-sector or 'parastatal' companies. The increases have not actually made up fully for the difference. *Table 21* shows annual salaries for various staff, from 1 July 1997 onwards.

Education officers are paid substantially more than even the best-qualified teachers, but their salaries are the same as those of heads of the larger secondary schools (a distinction is made between schools – type I, II or III – on the basis of their enrolment). Performance Management is being introduced, with the aim of linking salaries to performance, but this step has not yet been taken.

Table 21. Zimbabwe: basic annual salaries and monthly allowances of education staff, July 1997 onwards

Officers	Salaries (in Zimbabwe $)	Housing allowance	Transport allowance
EO	144,372	208	349
Head Secondary School I	144,372		
DEO	126,576	208	349
Head Secondary School II	126,576		
Head Secondary School III / Primary School I	106,332		
Senior Graduate Teacher	88,740		
Head Primary School III	74,460		
Untrained or Student Teacher	32,580		

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As can be seen in the above table, EOs and DEOs receive fixed monthly allowances for private travel and housing. When travelling for official purposes, they can either use a government vehicle, take public transport (for which they are reimbursed) or, use their own vehicle for which they are paid an allowance according to the vehicle and the type of road. The allowances paid were as follows (end 1998): Z$700 for hotel accommodation and Z$50 supplementary daily allowance (supervisors staying in private accommodation received Z$50); Z$70 and Z$80 for lunch and dinner respectively; Z$2.80 per km for a vehicle on a tarred road and Z$3.11 per km on gravel roads

Staff noted two main problems with these allowances: they lagged behind the cost of living, and there were serious delays, of up to two years, in their payment. It is in principle possible to ask for an advance, but supervisors consider it difficult to get these, because of bureaucratic practices.

The level of supervisors' salaries differs of course with the level of development of the country and the salaries paid to other public servants and in the private sector. They are relatively low in Tanzania, quite a bit higher in Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. In the last two countries, salaries of education personnel recently increased substantially, but in part to make up for the fact that they had lagged behind for a long time. Salaries everywhere depend mainly on position and experience, with no consideration for performance.

Most interviewed supervisors express some dissatisfaction with their salaries. This is not simply because they are considered too low, a complaint not unique to supervisors, but also because of what could be called management-related problems: some supervisors are paid less than the staff they have to monitor and advise; others are not paid exactly according to their present post. On the other hand, among the interviewed there are practically no complaints about not being paid on time.

The official level of allowances is probably sufficient for supervisors to travel and to find acceptable accommodation, in all countries except Tanzania, where budgetary problems are more severe than elsewhere. In the other countries, complaints relate mainly to the fact that obtaining such allowances, both before travelling or after visits, is a time-consuming bureaucratic exercise.

(b) Budgets

Where the budget for supervision is concerned, two questions are paramount: what is the size of the budget, in absolute terms and in comparison to the overall education budget; and, who controls the release of the funds, or, in other words, what financial autonomy do individual supervisors have? The answer to the first question is everywhere very difficult to find, as there seldom exists a specific budget for supervision services. Spending on supervision mainly consists of two items: salaries of supervisors and travel and subsistence allowances. It should not be complicated – although time-consuming – to get precise salary data. The budget for allowances is much more difficult to grasp, as these are generally assigned to regional offices as a whole, who use them for different purposes. The following overview shows that there are some differences between countries, but that, on the whole, information is scarce. The most relevant data come from the interviews during the case studies, and represent the opinions of the staff rather than statistical data.

Namibia is the only one of the four countries where a specific budget for supervision and support exists. Every region is expected to budget separately for 'supervision' under the headings: salaries, travel and subsistence. This budget is handled by the regional office, no separate allocation is made to individual officers, who, from time to time, suffer from restrictions on travel allocations and therefore cannot complete their inspection plan. Unfortunately, the research

team could not obtain detailed information on the share of supervision in total spending.

In ***Botswana***, the amounts released to regional offices for supervision and support services are considered sufficient. In addition, all primary inspectors have their own travel budget, which makes provision for their own activities and those they organize for teachers. They consider this allocation as too little and one complained: "The office has run short of funds several times. One has to limit trips to avoid over-expenditure; I also experience serious restrictions" on how to spend these funds.

In ***Tanzania***, the situation is undoubtedly worse: the funds are inadequate by far, in part because it is considered normal that inspection will be paid only after all essential amenities (office accommodation, electricity, car maintenance) have been met. The officers in Muheza district as a result have to rely on the schools for their food and accommodation during their few inspection visits, a situation which evidently does not render their work easier.

In ***Zimbabwe***, we can gain a very approximate impression of spending on supervision by examining a few figures. As in all other countries, the largest chunk of the budget, namely 92.7 per cent, goes to salaries, including those of supervision and support staff. Subsistence and travel allowances receive about 0.5 per cent of the total allocation. In-service courses, through which supervisors, among others, are trained, receive only 0.08 per cent. The funds which are of interest to supervisors, such as official travel subsistence, staff courses, office and maintenance, are allocated to the different regional offices. In principle, within each region, the budget should be redistributed to the district offices. In the Midlands region, however, this is only the case for 'vehicle hire' and 'PTC services', all other items being kept at regional level. Within the district, the EO controls the use of funds and individual supervisors have none or little say. They are of the opinion that this arrangement is unsatisfactory, as they do not have a precise idea of how the budget is being spent and they might suddenly be faced with a lack of funds, which forces them to remain in their offices.

Unfortunately, no specific data are available anywhere concerning the size of the supervision budget, in absolute terms and in comparison to the overall education budget. However, the bit of anecdotal evidence which exists, indicates that spending on supervision consumes only a very small percentage of the total education budget. The opinions of supervisors point at a more preoccupying reality, namely that spending on supervision has suffered disproportionally in recent years from the financial crisis. This has had severe detrimental effects on the quality of the service.

Concerning the second issue - who controls the release of the funds, or, in other words, what financial autonomy do individual supervisors have -, only in Botswana do supervisors receive their own travel budget, which does not mean that they have complete financial leeway. But that situation is probably preferable over the one existing in the other three countries, where regional office heads have control over the budget and might consider other priorities than supervision.

4. Working conditions

When examining working conditions, several factors should be looked at: the availability and quality of offices, office equipment and support staff, at central and decentralized levels; the housing situation and the distance between home and office, and, most importantly, the transport of the staff who have to undertake school visits and therefore need easy access to schools. The situation differs widely from one country to the other.

In ***Botswana***, a distinction can be drawn between staff based at headquarters and in the field. Headquarters personnel have a relatively comfortable working environment: office accommodation in a new, modern building is adequate; transport can be obtained from the Central Transport Organization (CTO), which

may lead to some administrative delay; facilities in the form of computers, photocopiers and office furniture are sufficient. Supervisors are provided with housing via the government's Housing Pool System.

Regional offices are generally based in rented buildings and often do not have all the required equipment such as computers, photocopiers and office furniture. The case study on Central region illustrates the situation of regional staff in charge of primary schools. All six staff had their own office, but none was particularly happy with it. The equipment available was more scarce than at central level: none had a computer, only one had a photocopier, none had a stationery cupboard, but all had a telephone, a typewriter (both in working condition for most of them) and a filing cabinet. The disparity in the provision of support staff is striking and remained unexplained: the number of such staff varies from six to one, the REO having only two. As far as housing and transport are concerned, the circumstances differ between officers. Half have been provided with accommodation by the authorities, the others renting privately, but all live fairly close to the office. Three inspectors have a 4x4 vehicle, which is, according to all three, in poor condition. Two, including the REO, rely on loans from the CTO pool, which are difficult to obtain. The in-service officer has no vehicle and relies on the inspectors. Regional offices, in charge of secondary, are generally somewhat better off, as the REO has official transport. However, SEOs also have to rely on vehicles from the CTO pool.

On the whole, of the five inspectors most were 'rather unsatisfied' with their working conditions, with the exception of one, who was 'totally unsatisfied', especially because of the lack of a workable typewriter, which made report writing an unnecessarily slow process.

Working conditions in ***Namibia*** are on the whole quite good. Offices and basic office equipment are available at headquarters and in all regions. Officers are generally based in a regional complex, where secretarial and other support staff are available. They have access to motor vehicles. There is, at times, a shortage, but, in order to avoid this, visits are organized in such a way that

advisory teachers accompany inspectors. Supervision and support staff are generally housed in the region's central town, where the office is located. Only one region is attempting to build offices, with accommodation, closer to schools.

Some more details can be added about the particular situation of staff posted in Ondangwa West region. From among the eleven staff interviewed, eight had a computer and one a typewriter. All had a telephone and only one did not have a fax. As far as their office was concerned, the main complaints were about the lack of separate office space and, in a few cases, the poor quality of some materials. Only the head of the circuit, an Inspector, has his own support staff, the ten others have to do without.

In almost all cases the Ministry is providing accommodation, fairly close to the office (on average 14 km). The government generally provides vehicles which can be used by the inspectors and advisory teachers, but sometimes financial constraints and shortage of vehicles hinder the visiting of schools. A majority of interviewed personnel is 'rather satisfied' with their working conditions, one third being either 'totally unsatisfied' or 'rather unsatisfied'.

The situation in ***Tanzania*** offers a stark contrast: poor working conditions are one of the main constraints on inspectors' effectiveness. Among the long list of complaints, which are mentioned, the following are the most important:

- lack of suitable offices: in some cases, officers have even been evicted because of the non-payment of rent and had to be accommodated in other offices, further from the schools;
- insufficient equipment and secretarial resources;
- shortage of transport;
- inadequate provision of travel allowances.

Once again, some details on one district, Muheza, can give a more concrete impression. Here, from among the 18 staff interviewed, ten have an individual office, while eight share. Seventeen of these consider this office to be

unsatisfactory. Not one has a computer, a photocopier or a fax, only one has a telephone. Ten have a filing cabinet, considered by all in poor condition. Only two have a typist and one a clerk. Housing is only provided to the DEO, but all officers found accommodation close to their office. The lack of transport to go out to schools adds to their distress: the DEO can use a vehicle owned by the District Executive Director, but all others have to use public transport (which does not go to all schools), use a bicycle or walk. As a result, as we will see, the number of schools inspected has decreased steeply over the last few years.

The situation is not very different in ***Zanzibar***. The availability and quality of offices and office equipment is not up to date, transport is unreliable and the service staff lacks in efficiency. The distance between the place of residence and work is rather great, which leads to lateness and absence. The problems, especially with transport, are nonetheless at a different level than on Tanzania Mainland, because of the island's small size.

In ***Zimbabwe***, office space is adequate for most staff based in regional offices. In most regions, the government has constructed blocks to accommodate all civil servants. However, in some regions, problems have arisen because housing for officers is difficult to find, and they are forced to travel long distances between home and work. At district level, the situation is more preoccupying, as several district offices do not have facilities and, therefore, operate from the regional office, while others rely on rented buildings. However, the government has started building office blocks in districts, as was done for regions, and many districts have already been taken care of. The problem remains that not all officers live close to their place of work. In both regional and district offices there is a scarcity of secretarial staff, which slows down report writing and thus feedback to visits.

In Kwekwe district, the situation was on the whole fairly satisfactory. All six supervisors have their own office, within a rented building, with a telephone, but without a filing cabinet. Together with some other staff, they share a typist, two clerks and one orderly. Not one member of staff is provided with housing by the government; all but one live fairly close to the office.

In principle, every region has its fleet of vehicles. However, many are in bad condition, and their use is prioritized for more urgent administrative tasks as opposed to supervision visits. The resulting shortage of vehicles has handicapped supervisors' efficiency. Indeed, the main complaint of officers in Kwekwe relates to transport. The office has one lorry, which can seat three people, used to transport materials as well as supervisors to the schools. As this is by far insufficient, supervisors use at times transport provided by other Ministries (Health, Local Government) and by booksellers. Such an arrangement is not always useful as supervisors have a different agenda when visiting schools than this staff. An alternative solution lies in resorting more to team inspection, a solution preferred by the supervisors and the schools.

A suitable working environment implies, as a minimum, that supervisors have separate office space and the basic tools to function efficiently. Probably the most important tools are a computer (or at least a typewriter), a filing cabinet and a telephone. From that point of view, and at the risk of simplifying, one could say that working conditions are distressing in Tanzania, acceptable in Zimbabwe and rather good in Namibia and Botswana.

In the three latter countries, most staff have a separate office or at least sufficient office space. Most also have a telephone (quite a few have a fax), and a filing cabinet, while an increasing number have a computer, although many, e.g. those posted at regional level in Botswana, have to make do with a typewriter. The contrast with Tanzania is striking. There, very few supervisors have what could be called an office, most working within empty office space, alone, without equipment, without direct linkage to regional, zonal or central officers. This is not simply de-motivating, but seriously hampers the functioning of the service. The absence of a working typewriter or computer makes report-writing an excessively difficult endeavour and limits the time which should be spent on other more

meaningful activities. It is somewhat startling that such a relatively cheap item as a filing cabinet is absent in so many offices. Filing reports, so that they can be used afterwards and can be referred to when necessary, is almost a pre-condition to ensuring a positive feed-back to and follow-up on visits.

But the most fundamental issue is of course transport. Recruiting officers and paying them salaries, without giving them the possibility to go out and visit schools, is hardly a good investment. All countries, but especially Tanzania and Zimbabwe, experience constraints in this regard. Not only is there a lack of vehicles, but the available ones are in some cases badly maintained or used for other purposes than school visits. Ensuring the availability of transport is a priority for any policy aimed at improving supervision services. Attempting to 'save money' by cutting budgets across the board can be self-defeating. Cutting in the transport availability of district staff condemns this personnel to remain in their offices, unemployed, without the possibility to visit schools, their 'raison d'être'.

III. THE ACTUAL OPERATION OF SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

This chapter paints a picture of the daily work which supervisors undertake. It concentrates fully on the actors at district or local level, who are supposed to go out and visit schools regularly, and examines issues such as:

- how is their work planned?
- how heavy is their workload and what are their main tasks?
- how regularly can they go out to schools?
- once they are in schools, what does such a visit precisely imply?
- what reports are written?
- to whom are these reports distributed?
- what actions are taken, by the schools and the supervisors, after visits and reports are made?

The case studies, prepared in each of the four countries, provide the basic material for this part. As explained in the introduction to this report, the case studies examined the situation of one particular district or region. These districts cannot be considered to be representative of the whole country, but they do illustrate a typical situation within the country. Drawing general conclusions from these particular situations needs therefore to be done with much care. This is especially true where supervisors express their personal opinions.

For the readers' comfort, this chapter will continue to refer to the four countries, rather than to the individual districts or regions which the case studies examined. It should be kept in mind, however, that the situation described is that of one district only and that other districts might face different circumstances.

1. Planning and workload

(a) Planning and norms

In all four countries, supervisors define individually their own work plans, especially for school visits. These plans, which are prepared annually and monthly, have to be approved by the head of office, to ensure both availability of funds and synchronization of supervision activities with other programmes. These plans are seldom fully implemented, because of the lack of transport, the lack of funds, the existence of vacant positions and unscheduled activities, such as meetings and workshops.

The workload of supervisors depends to a great extent on the number of schools for which they are responsible. For primary supervisors, the main criterion to distribute schools between staff is a geographical one, either an existing administrative sub-division (e.g. a number of wards in Tanzania) or an area specifically defined for supervision purposes (a circuit in Namibia) or simply a group of schools. In Botswana, there is also an explicit concern to ensure that the number of schools is fairly equally distributed. At secondary level and where advisory teachers are concerned, these are generally responsible for one or a few subjects within a wider geographical area.

In two countries, Namibia and Tanzania, the case studies do not mention the existence of official norms with regard to the number of schools or teachers to be visited and the number of reports to be made. In Tanzania, this is felt to be too dependent on the availability of funds and the urgency of the issues. In both countries, however, some indications do exist: in the absence of clear norms, regional offices or individual supervisors sometimes define their own norms, based on their experience and current practice. In the Ondangwa

West region in Namibia, staff therefore mention different norms: the number of schools to be visited per term varies between 40 and 100, the number of teachers to be inspected is around 40 per term; in addition, some supervisors claim that they are expected to participate in one regional and one circuit workshop per term and to organize four cluster workshops per year. These indications are evidently rather haphazard and difficult to respect. In Tanzania, inspectors believe that they are supposed to inspect about 10 schools a year.

In Zimbabwe, the issue of norms gave rise to quite some disagreement among the interviewed supervisors. Three of the six did not know of the existence of official norms. The three others gave different answers: the number of schools to be visited in a year is either 8 or 10, teachers to be visited 24, 30 or 33, reports to be written 8, 30 or 32. This confusion reflects the real situation, in the sense that norms do exist but not in a written form. It is understood within the central Ministry that each school should be visited three times a year, with each teacher being supervised on each occasion. However, this is nowhere written down and that of course explains the lack of clarity among supervisors.

Only Botswana has specified a clear norm: primary-school supervisors are required to cover 12 schools per year through a full inspection. The total number of teachers, which will be concerned, differs according to the size of the schools.

The overall impression is that, with the exception of Botswana, there is little clarity about the norms which should inform and guide the supervisors' work. The result is that it becomes more difficult for the service to plan its efforts and for the superior officers, such as the heads of regional offices, to evaluate those. Developing a culture of accountability, which is certainly desirable, can with

difficulty be done in the absence of clear performance criteria. In the same vein, not one of the four countries seems to have defined any rules or indications about the total time or percentage of total work to be dedicated to school visits.

(b) Distribution of time between tasks

Supervisors were asked to give a rough estimate of the time they spent within an average month on different activities, and also to identify what they consider to be their three priority tasks.

Three countries gave a detailed answer on the first question. The following *Tables 22-23* present the results, first for inspection personnel, then for advisory staff.

Table 22. Distribution of time between tasks for supervision staff

Task	Botswana %	Namibia %	Zimbabwe %
School visits	20	34	23
Report writing	8	11	18
Office work	42	25	28
Attending meetings	10	12	11
Teacher training and development[22]	8	9	15
Others[23]	12	9	5
Total	100	100	100

22. Is called: 'teachers' social problems' and 'conducting in-service training' in Botswana; and 'staff development' in Zimbabwe.
23. Includes 'investigating discipline cases' for Botswana; 'workshops', 'counselling', 'parent meetings' and 'clerks and school secretaries' for Namibia; 'school functions', 'investigations' and 'pastoral' in Zimbabwe.

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Table 23. Distribution of time between tasks for advisory staff

Task	Botswana In-service %	Namibia Advisory teacher %
School visits	30	18
Report writing	15	14
Office work	0	25
Attending meetings	5	7
Teacher training and development	50	35
Others[24]	0	1
Total	100	100

The most time-consuming tasks of supervisors are office work in Botswana and Zimbabwe, and school visits in Namibia, where office work comes second. Together these two tasks take up about half of the time in Zimbabwe and about 60 per cent in the two other countries. The remainder of time is almost equally divided between report writing, attending meetings, teacher training and development and a set of other minor tasks. It is clear from these data that visiting schools does not occupy the priority position which one could expect. Two factors are at play: the overload of different tasks and the weight of office work. These factors are less important in the case of advisory staff (see *Table 23*), especially in Botswana where the time distribution of the one in-service officer interviewed shows a clear focus on teacher training and development and on school visits.

As it is somewhat difficult, on the basis of the above data, to see the time spent on pedagogical and administrative tasks (report writing and attending meetings could be considered either of both), the same three countries also asked supervision and support staff explicitly to

24. Includes 'personnel development' and 'examinations' for Namibia.

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make that distinction (see *Table 24*). A few examples will clarify the distinction: administrative tasks include taking care of teacher salaries, arranging transport and accommodation, sending mail to schools, typing leave requests and similar forms; pedagogical tasks include preparation of training materials, writing school-visit reports, attending meetings to discuss school performance and visiting schools. The data confirm the image of supervisors' daily work seen above: the involvement in administrative tasks takes up more than half of an inspector's time in Botswana and Namibia, and just about half in Zimbabwe. What should be priority, pedagogical supervision and support, thus occupies second place. The advisory teachers (in Namibia) do succeed in dedicating most of their time to pedagogical tasks.

Table 24. Distribution of time between pedagogical and administrative duties

	Pedagogical %	Administrative %
Botswana Inspector	38	62
Namibia Advisory Teacher	58	42
Namibia Inspector	38	62
Zimbabwe Education Officer	49	51

Supervisors were also asked to identify what they consider their most and their least useful tasks. This allows us to compare their actual work with what they consider essential to achieve their objectives.

In ***Botswana***, inspectors feel that the tasks on which they spend most time (office administration; inspecting schools and writing reports; teacher management; and, meetings on issues related to their work) are also the most useful ones, although the order of importance is not the same: they would like

more time for what they perceive as the real supervision work, namely school visits. Among the tasks they find least helpful, are: attending meetings unrelated to their work; a cting as transport officer; officiating at parents' days. The data on ***Namibia*** are somewhat more difficult to interpret, but lead to similar conclusions. The most important task, mentioned by all inspectors, is inspection itself, followed by supervision and training of headteachers. Among the least useful tasks are: attending meetings, signing teacher leave forms, collection of mail and delivering messages to schools. These non-useful tasks can still take up about a third of their time. Inspectors in ***Tanzania*** follow a similar line of thought: the three main tasks are all related to the core of their job and represent to some extent the cycle of supervision, namely supervision of teaching, preparation of reports and follow-up visits. (The question relating to the least useful tasks was not asked). Supervisors in ***Zimbabwe*** differed little in their opinion from elsewhere: the most important tasks are: supervision, staff development and report writing; the least important are: meetings and administration.

Advisory teachers in ***Namibia*** considered the following to be their most useful tasks: school visits, advice to and training of teachers, and planning and conducting workshops. Least important are the more menial tasks, which are to some degree necessary in preparation for or as a follow-up to the above: photocopying, arranging transport, sending invitations and writing reports. The in-service officer in ***Botswana*** sees conducting workshops, monitoring and follow-up and working with individual teachers as her core tasks.

The following emerges from the preceding overview. On the one hand, there is a preoccupying discrepancy between what supervisors consider their most crucial duties and the actual time they dedicate to those. Too much of their time is indeed spent on administrative and purely practical matters of a rather petty nature, which have very little impact on the functioning of schools and the quality of teaching. On the other hand, advisory teachers, where they exist, face a less worrying situation: the activities which they consider most useful,

are also those on which they spend most of their time. Even the more practical issues, which they find less useful, relate more closely to their work, than in the case of supervisors. Two factors are at play. Firstly, administrative duties do not occupy a central place in their job description. But one can say almost the same of supervisors, whose job description is focused on supervision and support. The second factor is more important: it seems that advisory teachers can avoid doing administrative tasks, because they have somebody else to rely on to do these tasks, namely the supervisors. Supervisors are not in that position. The creation of a separate category of officers in charge of teacher advice and development has allowed this staff to concentrate on their core duty and has probably meant that schools receive more support. However, it has not led to a lessening of the administrative workload of the supervisors. Their situation might well have worsened. The fact that in Botswana and Namibia, the two countries where pedagogical advisers exist, inspectors spend more time on administration than in Zimbabwe, where there are no advisers, proves to some extent this conclusion.

(c) Number of school visits

Knowing that supervisors spend relatively little time on school visits and that the number of schools under their charge is sizeable, the question evidently crops up: how many schools do they actually supervise on average in a month or a year? There are several aspects to this issue: there is the view of supervisors on how many schools and teachers they observe, this should be confronted by the opinion of the schools themselves, and finally some explanations should be given with regard to the situation we encounter. To complicate matters somewhat, two countries (Botswana and Tanzania) presented relevant information in their national report, concerning the country as a whole, as well as in the regional case study, with some differences between both.

In ***Botswana***, the national report, when considering these issues, makes a distinction between primary and secondary schools. At primary level, an SEO is responsible for 20 schools on average. As each officer is supposed to have an official vehicle, it is possible to visit even the remote schools fairly regularly. An average inspector can visit every school twice a year for a short visit, in addition to giving each school a full inspection once every two years. This regular contact makes for a fairly intimate knowledge of schools, if not of teachers. At secondary level, the situation is more dramatic, for different reasons. Firstly, there are too few officers, especially because of subject specialization. The school/supervisor ratio is actually lower than for primary (8 as compared to 20), but this is a misleading picture, as all supervisors are subject specialists; a specialist supervisor therefore needs to be compared to the total number of subject teachers. Secondly, few of this staff is working in regional offices. As a result, not one region has all the necessary subject specialists and the distance between the schools and the supervisors is bigger than at primary. In addition, they have insufficient transport facilities.

The data collected from among supervisors and school staff in the Central region in Botswana, somewhat amends this picture: primary-school supervisors claim that they visit almost all schools at least once a year, and about 65 per cent of teachers. According to schools, visits are somewhat less frequent: only eight out of ten schools were visited during the last school year, while for one school, situated close to the regional office, the last visit dated from four years previously. Not all of these visits were full inspections, some being brief courtesy visits. The same schools are of the opinion that on average about 40 per cent of teachers get supervised during one year. It is remarkable that in some schools all teachers had been supervised, while in others none had been.

In ***Namibia***, in the Okahao circuit, only the point of view of inspectors and of advisory teachers was examined, not that of schools. Inspectors visited, during the preceding school year, about two-thirds of schools and about half of the teachers at least once. Advisory teachers, who are responsible for a larger number of schools, could give assistance to only about one out of five schools and one out of four teachers.

The information on ***Tanzania*** is more diversified, because some data are available both for the country as a whole and on Muheza district. The national data are presented in *Figure 10* and *Table 25*: the total number of primary schools are compared with those inspected, and the number of inspectors. The data concern the period from 1992 to 1995, as in recent years such data were no longer available. While there has been a decrease in inspection staff, this alone cannot explain the worrying decline in school visits. The most important reason lies in the dire circumstances in which supervision and support services operate in Tanzania and which were described above: the poor working conditions and the lack of transport and funds to visit schools. On average, an inspector in 1995 only inspected about three schools. The information collected in Muheza district, covering more recent years, shows that the situation seems to have improved somewhat since then, at least in that district. Still some schools have been left without any supervision for over five years.

Figure 10. Tanzania: % of schools not inspected

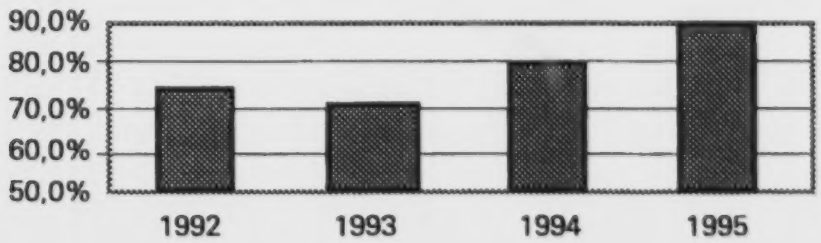

Table 25. Tanzania: primary schools inspected per year[25]

Year	Number of schools	Number inspected	% inspected	Number of inspectors	Average visits per inspector
1992	10,793	2,876	26.6	541	5.3
1993	10,847	3,118	28.7	460	6.8
1994	10,920	2,440	22.3	465	5.2
1995	11,062	1,336	12.1	446	3.0

25. *Source*: National data.

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Inspectors of the Muheza district undertook 16 full inspection visits and 14 teacher inspections over the preceding year. Some schools however were visited more than five times, others only once and some not at all. The result is that in 1998 only nine out of the twenty schools received a full visit. That was actually better than the years before: in 1996, for instance, not one school did so. It seems that, maybe contrary to expectations, schools closer to the offices do not get more, but rather less visits than those far away. The number of teachers visited not surprisingly also differs: in one school, this was the case for less than a quarter of teachers; in another eight for more than three-quarters of teachers. On the whole, about 40 per cent of schools and 45 per cent of teachers received an inspection visit, the precise duration and intensity of that visit differing quite a bit.

Table 26. Zimbabwe: regularity of teacher inspection visits

Location	Number of teachers	Average years between visits	Number of visits in 1997
Urban	12	3.14	2
Peri-urban	13	1.70	3
Rural	10	4.22	0
Total	35	2.65	5

Finally, for ***Zimbabwe***, information is available on each of the six officers, who were interviewed in Kwekwe district. The DEOs could visit between two-thirds and four-fifths of their schools, and inspect between 7 and 30 per cent of teachers during the preceding year. The EO, whose administrative tasks are obviously heavier, took part in quite a number of these visits. A more detailed research was done on visits to teachers. Thirty-five teachers were interviewed and asked how many times they had been inspected during the whole of their career. The results are in *Table 26*. This table shows that on average a teacher receives an inspection visit about every two and a half years, or thus twice in five years, which is far below the unwritten official expectation of three visits per year. There is however a sizeable disparity in function of their location:

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teachers in the peri-urban area get about three visits every five years, those in rural areas only about one. In 1997, only five teachers out of this sample of 35 had been inspected, and none of these was working in the rural area.

In all countries, the data show that supervisors do not succeed in visiting, within one school year, all the schools for which they are responsible, even less all the teachers. The reasons given by supervisors do not need much comment: transport problems; too many schools, partly because posts are left vacant; organization of unscheduled activities. Teachers and headteachers recognize the importance of these constraints, but they also believe that the lack of skills and of training equally plays a role. In a few cases, they mention that some supervisors prefer to travel to the more remote, but still accessible, schools, in order to receive more travel allowances.

The advisory teachers in Namibia, who could offer advice to a small percentage of their teachers only, add that teacher support and development is a time-intensive activity. This is a point that probably deserves some emphasis: offering valuable supervision and support takes time and can scarcely be achieved through hurried visits. The right criterion on which to judge the effectiveness of supervision is probably not the number of schools visited, but the content and impact of such visits. The main problem with this approach is that we do not know precisely what the term 'inspection visit' in the different countries implies. It might be more useful to make a full supervision visit to a few carefully selected schools, than to undertake superficial visits to all schools indiscriminately. It is worth remembering at the same time that any judgement of the efficiency and sufficiency of visits should be made in function of the avowed objective of the service. Administrative control demands shorter visits, but to a larger group of schools, ideally all schools, than pedagogical supervision and support.

There is little doubt that, in present circumstances, the number of schools and teachers assigned to supervisors and advisory teachers in all of the four countries, is too high, if one expects this staff to visit most, if not all, of these schools and teachers regularly and to offer consistent support and supervision. Two solutions present themselves. The first one would be to appoint more supervisors and to improve their working conditions, especially the transport. But this might be a rather challenging proposal, in view of the existing budget constraints. A more attractive strategy might reside in demanding that supervisors concentrate their interventions on the schools most in need of their support, in other words to develop a diversified approach, which will serve schools in function of their needs.

As will be seen in the following section, such a diversified approach is already being used to some extent, but more as a result of necessity than policy. Because supervisors are unable to visit all schools, a selection becomes necessary: one criterion might then be the needs of the school. Headteachers in urban schools in the Kwekwe district (Zimbabwe), for instance, explain the rare number of visits they receive by referring to their rather good performance and to the fact that supervisors therefore do not feel the need to come and control their performance regularly. However, it was noted that in the same district the more remote rural schools are less frequently visited than the peri-urban schools and this undoubtedly finds its explanation in transport and budgetary problems rather than in a diversification policy.

2. School visits

The precise programme and content of a school visit is crucially important: as mentioned already, the term visit can imply a very brief

encounter with a headteacher, or a three-day full examination of school management, teacher performance and parental opinions. To get a more precise idea of what the term 'school visit' stands for, the case studies looked at several issues: how are schools selected for visits, how do supervisors prepare themselves and what preparations do schools take, is notice given to schools, what types of visits exist, what is their duration and what precisely do supervisors do when in schools?

(a) Selection of schools

In only one case study, Namibia, were precise details given about how schools are selected. Different criteria intervene in the case of the advisory teachers:

- schools which face problems, especially the poor performance of the school or of teachers;
- upon well-motivated requests by schools;
- to assess the ability of a teacher to be appointed or promoted;
- when schools are adding a new grade or implementing a new syllabus;
- to serve schools far away from the centre or facing lack of materials.

The criteria used by the inspectors in Namibia are not very different, although 'random selection' is also mentioned. The Zimbabwe report indicates that 'problem schools' and those which have not been supervised for very long receive priority. In Botswana and Zimbabwe, the information presented in the preceding section about the number of school visits, shows a preference to go to schools which are not very close to the office (as these are generally well functioning) and those which are not too remote (as they would be difficult to reach). It is not surprising that transport availability becomes a core criterion, when it is both a necessity and a constraint.

It seems from the interviews with supervisors throughout the four countries, that the selection of schools is to a large degree a pragmatic matter. When schools experience a problem, and they are rather easy to reach, they will be visited as a priority. Schools which seem to function quite well might receive brief courtesy visits, but not much more. Schools far away will be visited whenever necessary and feasible. In addition, quite a number of schools which are close, or on a main road, might regularly have a supervisor come in for a short visit, when passing by.

(b) Preparation by supervisors and notice to schools

Once a school has been selected, supervisors prepare themselves in a fairly straightforward way: they obtain, if necessary, permission from their superior; they identify what is the main objective, prepare whatever materials and documents are needed (checklists, standard report forms) and make practical arrangements. The interviewed inspectors in the Central region in Botswana indicate that, in addition, they will take along policy documents relating to the visits' objectives (syllabi, code of regulations). They will also consult several documents related to the schools to be visited. In Botswana this includes the report of the last visit, the teachers' timetable and recent correspondence with the school, which might have prompted the visit. The schools themselves are not requested for any particular information. The Namibian advisory teachers and inspectors look at a more complete file, which contains some information about the school's quality, such as pupil/teacher ratio and examination results, and about individual teachers. In Zimbabwe, the importance of consulting previous reports is stressed, as this offers the supervisor an entrance point into the school, by examining the implementation of previous recommendations. However, the Kwekwe case study comments that previous reports are seldom available, partly because

of the poor or absent filing systems and partly because official regulations do not stipulate that a copy should be kept in the district office.

One issue, on which disagreement exists, concerns the need to give schools notice of visits. The practic as well as the opinion of supervisors and teachers differ from country to country.

In ***Botswana***, an unwritten rule seems to exist: full inspections are always announced, while this is not always the case for informal ones. Headteachers confirmed this and mentioned that they generally receive notice between one month and one week in advance, upon which they inform their teachers. Courtesy visits can occur unannounced. Inspectors and in-service officers all agree in general that visits should be announced. The main advantages are that teachers can prepare a list of the problems and constraints they encounter and that in such a way visits will reassure rather than frighten teachers. They also recognize some disadvantages: schools adopt an artificial tone and prepare themselves for the visitor rather than to show their real image. Headteachers agree and therefore claim that a few spot visits are not unwelcome.

In ***Namibia***, advisory teachers showed a somewhat ambivalent attitude: about two thirds prefer to inform teachers in advance, the rest believing this should only be done sometimes. The disadvantages of prior notice, mentioned in Botswana, are here repeated. The reasons why notice should nonetheless be given, relate to more practical matters: the teacher should be available and prepared.

In ***Tanzania***, the rule apparently is that, for full visits, written information should be transmitted one or two months before, while for courtesy visits oral messages are sufficient. In principle, schools should be informed. The practice, however, is different. When headteachers in the Muheza district were asked if they receive notice of full inspection visits, only one out of the twelve, who had received several such visits in recent years, was always informed. Four were said to be

'regularly' informed, another four 'seldom' and three 'never'. In the case of teachers' inspections, 13 out of 17 schools were never informed. A majority of headteachers disagree with this practice: 70 per cent (14 out of 20) believe that they should be informed of supervision visits beforehand, for the reasons already quoted and also to ensure greater participation in the whole exercise.

The ***Zimbabwe*** case study raises two more practical matters. Firstly many rural and even peri-urban schools cannot be reached for the simple lack of a telephone. One of the school heads mentioned that they only learn about these visits "if we happen to meet supervisors informally during our shopping visits to urban centres." Secondly, quite a number of, especially shorter, visits are unannounced because they are unplanned and occur when supervisors by accident are close to a school. As a result, even urban headteachers mention that they only know about most visits when supervisors arrive in the school. The Zimbabwe case also shows a clear conflict of opinion between supervisors and heads. Most supervisors (four out of six) think schools should not be given notice. Most heads (ten out of twelve) believe they should. The reasons on both sides are similar to the ones mentioned above, and one headteacher said in this regard: "guerrilla warfare tactics are outdated".

Not one of the four countries has defined an unambiguous policy concerning giving schools notice of visits. Much depends on a combination of the personal opinions of the staff and a set of practical matters.

The personal opinions of supervisors differ in relation to what they see as their role and the type of visit. When their purpose is fault-finding through brief spot-checks, giving notice would be contrary to that purpose. Visits which are meant to gain a complete overview of the school's functioning through a full inspection are generally announced, to allow the school and the teachers to collect and update all the necessary information. When teachers are visited to offer them support and advice, they are generally informed

beforehand, to ensure a mutually trusting relationship and also to allow the teachers to prepare themselves. Teacher inspections in many cases are not announced.

The above 'rules' only apply insofar as a number of practical problems do not occur. What is indeed more important than the convictions of the supervisors are the practical constraints they experience. Many visits take place unplanned, many planned visits cannot be held as foreseen, and schools are difficult to contact because of the lack of means of communication.

It is not surprising that there are differences of opinion between supervisors, headteachers and teachers. Supervisors are, on the whole, the least eager to give regular notice. Headteachers are somewhat ambivalent: they demand in general to be informed, an understandable attitude, especially if their own performance is being assessed. They are less insistent on the need for notice when teachers will be the main targets of the inspection, and are at times even in favour of surprise visits, which can offer them arguments in their attempts to discipline and control the teaching staff.

(c) Preparation by schools

If schools receive notice, what preparations do they undertake before inspectors arrive? In two countries, headteachers gave some information in this regard. In Botswana, the heads will ask the teachers to update their records, will collect the necessary documentation and make a list of priority problem areas. Similar preparations will be made in Tanzania: school records will be checked with regard to availability and accuracy; teachers will get their files in order; the school plan of action will be readied and the school's cleanliness looked at. The headteachers believe these preparations to be especially useful: it offers the school an opportunity to identify

areas which can be improved, and increases the teachers' confidence and thus the benefit they will derive from the supervision.

(d) Types and duration of visits

All countries draw a distinction between different types of supervision visits. The following *Table 27* presents, for each country and, in the case of Namibia, for separate categories of staff, the duration of these visits and indicates if they are undertaken by individuals or teams.

Table 27. Different types of school visits[26]

(a) ***Botswana****, inspector*

Type of visit	Duration	Actors
Full inspection	5 days	Individual/team
Partial inspection	2 to 3 days	Individual
Teacher inspection	1 day	Individual
Follow-up visit	1 to 2 days	Individual
Courtesy visit	1 day	Individual

(b) ***Namibia****, advisory teacher*

Type of visit	Duration	Actors
Advisory visit	3 days	Individual or team
Follow-up visit	2 days	Individual or team
Teacher inspection	1 day	Individual or team
Panel visit (to a group of schools)	3 weeks	Team

26. Interpreting and comparing the duration of supervision visits needs to be done with care: the same type of visit does not cover everywhere the same activities; disagreement and differences might exist between officers. In all countries, in principle, the time mentioned is the time spent in schools and does not include travelling.

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*(c) **Namibia**, inspector*

Type of visit	Duration	Actors
Full inspection	1 day	Individual
Follow-up	1 day	Individual
Institutional school inspection	1 day	Individual
Teacher inspection	½ day	Individual
Courtesy visit	½ day	Individual

*(d) **Tanzania**, inspector*

Type of visit	Duration	Actors
Full inspection	8 hours	4 officers on average
Teacher inspection	3 hours	2 officers on average
Visit of teacher adviser	3 hours	1 officer on average
Follow-up visit	3 hours	1 officer on average
Courtesy visit	1 hour	5 officers on average

*(e) **Zimbabwe**, education officer*

Type of visit	Duration	Actors
Full inspection	4 hours	Team
Institutional inspection	2.5 hours	Team
Spot checks	1 hour	Individual
Teacher supervision	2.5 hours	Individual
Follow-up visit	3 hours	Individual or team
Courtesy visit	1 hour	Individual or team
Advisory visit	2 hours	Team

In all four countries a full inspection, a teacher inspection, a follow-up visit and a courtesy visit exist. In addition, in Namibia and Zimbabwe, there are 'institutional school inspections', 'advisory visits' in Tanzania and Zimbabwe and, of course, in Botswana and Namibia, where they are the task of separate staff. Botswana identifies also 'partial inspections' and Zimbabwe 'spot checks'.

The objectives of these visits are different and their duration and the number of people involved also differ from country to country. A full inspection visit, as the term implies, will look at all the aspects of the school, especially its management. It is undertaken in Tanzania and Zimbabwe by a team, which stays for half a day or one day, and in the two other countries by one individual supervisor, who, in Botswana, spends a whole week in the school. For secondary schools in Botswana, however, all full inspections will be undertaken by a team. Teacher inspections are everywhere, except in Tanzania, the task of a single supervisor, staying from 2.5 hours to a day, depending on the country. Similar remarks can be made regarding follow-up visits and courtesy visits. The advisory teachers in Namibia generally take much more time when they are in a school. A panel visit by a whole team, which admittedly covers several schools, can take up to three weeks.

The divergence between countries in time spent in schools for a full inspection can be explained to some extent by the difference in content and objectives of such visits, between countries. But this also shows that it is difficult to define an ideal timing and an ideal team for a full inspection visit. Obviously, school size plays a role. But, in any case, it could be ambitious, not to say self-defeating, to expect a single supervisor to gain a full image of a school's functioning and quality from a one-day visit, or even to ask the same from a team which stays for half a day. On the other hand, of course, requesting that supervisors stay longer than one day in each school will lead to still less visits to other schools and might also face a few practical problems, such as lodging. If supervision is considered a mainly control-oriented exercise, the main objective of which lies in ensuring that all schools and teachers to a large extent respect the official rules and regulations, then the present arrangement of relatively short full inspection visits, interspersed with much briefer courtesy visits,

teacher inspections and follow-up visits, could be considered pertinent. But that arrangement poses not simply a problem of substance (should control be supervisors' main task?), it is at present ineffective, as it does not succeed in controlling all schools and even less the most remote ones, where official rules might be more regularly flouted. If supervision is seen as a school and teacher development activity, longer, more intensive and more regular visits will be needed, but, as was mentioned already, these should be concentrated on the least effective schools. Advisory teachers in Botswana and Namibia are to some extent already following this path.

(e) The activities of a supervision visit

The content of a visit depends in part on the type of visit. The following paragraphs describe what takes place during a full inspection visit.

In all four countries, this type of visit follows more or less the same pattern. If the supervisors arrive early in the morning, they might attend the opening of the school and give a short speech. In all cases, the first important meeting is with the head for a briefing regarding the objectives of the visit and to make practical arrangements. The seven headteachers interviewed in the Central Region in Botswana indicate that they are not asked to make any suggestions to the inspectors on how they should proceed with the visit. In the Muheza district in Tanzania, this was the case for only 5 out of 20, the remainder were asked for their input 'sometimes' or 'always'. The headteacher briefing could be followed by a short staff meeting, although this is only mentioned in Botswana. In the other countries, the supervisors will immediately proceed with the collection of relevant information and with classroom observation. The information to be collected includes, to use Zimbabwe as an example, data pertaining to the general administration of the school, the type,

quality and quantity of infrastructure, lesson delivery, resource provision, numbers of pupils and teachers, and past performance in examinations. Classroom observation includes checking pupils' exercise books and assessment records and is followed by a discussion with the individual teacher to give him or her advice. Supervisors seldom visit all classrooms. In principle, facilities are also inspected, although in Botswana headteachers indicate that this seldom takes place. At the end of the visit, a staff meeting is held with all teachers and a debriefing meeting with the head. Headteachers commented that such after-inspection discussions are very useful, as they help to identify areas where immediate action can be taken by the school staff themselves.

In not one of the four countries does a full supervision visit include a discussion or a meeting with the parents. Such meetings might well happen from time to time, especially during courtesy visits, but it seems that they take place systematically only in Zimbabwe. They do not figure on the agenda of a full inspection, but form part of the schedule of an institutional inspection and a courtesy visit.

Visits by advisory staff follow a different pattern from a full inspection. They focus more on the teachers, or on a single teacher, than on the school. They will spend little or no time with the headteacher, focusing their attention on the teacher in the classroom. The process is also more participatory, with discussions between the teacher and the adviser, both before and after the lessons observed. In Botswana, for instance, the in-service officer mentions that the teachers are asked to indicate areas where they want to be observed and that they will participate in the observation, by highlighting what they see as their weak and strong points. Some-secondary school teachers mentioned however that they are not always informed beforehand of the visit of an in-service officer, which makes it more complicated for the teachers to prepare themselves.

3. Reports

(a) The regularity of report writing

In all four countries a lot of stress is put on reports. In Zimbabwe, a circular by the Chief Education Officer states: "Much value is attached to report writing, as the report is a permanent record and, in the majority of cases, is the only means by which the Ministry gets to know about the state of education provision in the schools." In principle, every visit leads to a record, if not necessarily a report. Indeed, brief courtesy visits are probably too poor in substance to warrant a report, but brief comments are made in the school's logbook. Supervisors in Tanzania, Botswana and Zimbabwe confirmed that, for most other visits, reports are systematically made. In the Kwekwe district in Zimbabwe, the case study commented that reports tend to concentrate more on school heads and on teachers, on individuals therefore, rather than on institutional aspects. In Namibia, a majority of both inspectors and advisory teachers said that they always, or very often, write reports, but a few indicated that they do so seldom or never for courtesy visits, for institutional school inspections and for advisory visits. Some claim that writing a report for every visit is too time-consuming and that maybe three-monthly summary reports are a better solution.

In principle, standard report forms exist in each country. This does not mean that they are also available to and used by all supervisors. There is not much information on this issue, but what is available is somewhat distressing. In the Ondangwa West region in Namibia, only about one-quarter of the interviewed advisory teachers knew of the existence of standardized forms and used them.

(b) Content of reports

Only the Zimbabwe case study offers detailed information on the content of reports. Each report starts with some basic data on the individual or the school to be inspected. This is generally followed by an identification of the visit's purpose ('to assess the competence of the classroom practitioner' or 'to assess the administrative ability of the head and to assist where possible'). Then follows a description of the workload and responsibilities of the teacher or headteacher and a comment regarding his or her suitability for this job. The main part consists of an evaluation of the performance, which will be more pedagogical where teachers are concerned, and pedagogical as well as administrative for heads. Regularly, reference is made to facts to underlie the evaluation: the marking of pupils' exercise books, the number of staff and parents' meetings held and so on. Where criticism is given, generally this is accompanied by more positive, encouraging comments. In the case of the report on heads, the standard report form contains, for that purpose, a section entitled 'Noteworthy achievements'. The report ends with conclusions and recommendations. The nature of these recommendations, and the way in which supervisors will follow up on them, are crucial to the impact of a supervision visit and to the satisfaction of schools and teachers with the whole supervision service.

Before reports are finalized, they are generally discussed informally at the end of the school visit, with the headteacher and the concerned teachers. In the office itself, discussions will be held with colleagues and the superior officer: the district education officer in Tanzania, for instance, or in Namibia the senior advisory teacher and/or the circuit inspector.

(c) Filing and distribution

One copy of the written reports is kept in the district office, where the supervisor is based, for filing. This however is not the case in Kwekwe district in Zimbabwe, apparently because the district office was not explicitly mentioned in the relevant official circular. This is deplorable, because it undermines supervisors' efforts to follow up on previous visits. It had already been noted that in some cases, especially in Tanzania, the lack of filing cabinets makes it difficult to keep reports for a long time in a useful state.

Another copy should in principle be sent to the headteacher and, where it relates to teacher inspections, generally also to the individual concerned. In Tanzania, school reports are filed and kept in the headteacher's office and teachers can only consult them after a special meeting with the head. It seems indeed, from the anecdotal evidence available, that most schools receive reports, although the time taken for a report to arrive can be long. In the Central region in Botswana, all but one primary school received the report within a month, but in one secondary school it had taken more than a year for a full inspection report to arrive. A comparable situation is reported in the Zimbabwe case study: all heads received the reports, some within two weeks, others – especially in the more remote schools – had to wait for two months.

Reports are distributed to some other officials, in Namibia, for instance, to the Regional Director and, in some cases, the Regional Planning Officer. In Zimbabwe, copies are also systematically sent to the Ministry of Education's headquarters, where, as is known, the Standards and Control Unit will analyze them.

There is some controversy about the usefulness of sending reports to School Boards or similar bodies with parents' representation. The

interviewed school headteachers generally agree that teacher inspection reports should not be made available to these bodies, because, to quote the Zimbabwe report, "such reports were on professional issues which communities had nothing to do with". In Namibia, two other points are mentioned: distributing reports might create conflicts; Board members should be able to read and understand the reports' content. Most supervisors, heads and teachers agreed that reports which put more emphasis on institutional issues (school enrolment, infrastructural and financial matters, relations with the community, school calendar and organization) could usefully be communicated to the Board. The reasons given are that parental involvement should be encouraged, that the reports could enhance collective responsibility and might create a sense of responsibility among the community. In addition, it is useful that the community be kept informed of some matters. It is not clear, from the scant information available, in how far reports are actually distributed to the school board or committee. Officially, this seems to be the case only in Tanzania, where, in principle, boards will be informed of matters related to their role and function and an executive summary is presented together with the detailed report, for their information. In the other countries, schools might transmit the report or some of its findings to the board, but in how far this is done, remains unclear. In Botswana, most secondary schools do discuss supervision reports with the board, because these reports are more institutional, while primary headteachers prefer to keep the reports more confidential.

4. Follow-up, including use of reports

Reports should lead to actions, both by the school and by the supervisors. The nature of this follow-up depends of course in part on the quality of the report's recommendations. Equally important is

the margin of manoeuvre of schools and supervisors, which is a function of their autonomy, their authority and the resources available to them. The following paragraphs will first give some attention to the nature of the recommendations, before examining in how far and in which ways action is taken on them.

(a) Recommendations

When asked about the usefulness of recommendations, headteachers in Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe underlined the importance of two factors: the relevance of the topic addressed and the precision of the recommendation. Headteachers in Botswana in this regard listed the following among the useful suggestions: 'the school to supply mathematical instruments to students', 'directions on how to make comments in students' continuous assessment files', 'advice on keeping pupils' records', but found 'introduction of English as a medium of instruction in Standard 2' a recommendation of little value, because of the lack of trained teachers and materials. (It is encouraging to note that more than half of heads did not identify any useless recommendations). The teachers' list of helpful advice included: 'provision of in-service for teachers', 'teachers to be deployed to level appropriate to their skills', 'regular marking of pupils' work' and 'team teaching', but found advice regarding discipline in large classes to be unpractical. School heads in Tanzania considered all recommendations to be of value, and identified a fairly large list of areas where such advice is particularly useful, going from 'staff and staff welfare' over 'school community relations' to 'evaluation of lessons'.

Through these and other comments from school staff, it can be deduced that recommendations become more appreciated the more precise they are, through for instance identifying an actor and a deadline for the implementation of a particular proposal. There are,

it seems, two types of recommendations which are particularly appreciated by school staff:

- those with an obvious pedagogical impact, which can be implemented by the school or the teacher at little cost and fairly easily, and are precise in their formulation;
- those which are being addressed to a higher instance (the district office, the regional office or even the Ministry) and from which school staff will benefit.

Recommendations which show little appreciation of the real situation and daily constraints met by teachers, are considered unhelpful.

(b) Follow-up by the school

Three questions arise when examining the response given by the school to reports: what is actually done to the report itself; with whom are its findings and conclusions discussed; what action is taken? Reports are generally filed by the headteacher, which in most cases implies that they are not freely available to the individual teachers. One school in Botswana displays a copy in the staff room and in the library, for the teachers' use. All heads, who were questioned in Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, discuss full inspection reports with all their teachers during a staff meeting (this question was not raised in Namibia). Specific teacher supervision reports will lead to a meeting with the interested teacher only. In the Central region in Botswana, four of the seven heads also arranged for a special separate discussion on full inspection reports with the School Senior Management and a few discussed with the Board of Governors. In Tanzania and Zimbabwe, a discussion with the board or the school development committee is more regular, but limited to issues of interest to them.

A majority of schools takes some action on the reports' recommendations, but the level and coverage of this follow-up differs from country to country and from school to school. In Zimbabwe, all headteachers claim that they attempt to develop with their teachers action plans to implement the recommendations. Four out of six interviewed supervisors, however, noted their dissatisfaction with the action taken by schools. In Botswana, the situation differs very much between schools: some heads 'always' take action, others do so 'most of the time', and a few only 'sometimes'. The action taken can be to call specific meetings, to visit some teachers more regularly in their classroom and to discuss with them in order to motivate them, and to develop action plans. All but one of the seven headteachers from the Central region in Botswana indicated that they prepare a specific action plan to put some recommendations into practice. Teachers confirmed this. In Namibia, the interviewed headteachers attested that their satisfaction with teachers' implementation of advice is poor: in the case of about two-thirds of teachers, they are 'totally unsatisfied' or 'rather unsatisfied'. They believe that in general standards do not improve, in part because teachers know that follow-up actions by supervision and support staff will not take place. The point is crucial: expecting from school staff commitment to taking action should be accompanied by a similar commitment among supervisors.

(c) Follow-up by the supervisors

Headteachers and teachers show on the whole little satisfaction with the follow-up undertaken by supervisors themselves. In Botswana heads complain that follow-up visits are only undertaken after a long time and are superficial. Teachers are still more critical: the report says that they are totally unsatisfied. Namibia's data are similarly discomforting: none of the supervisors – this is the point of view of heads – undertakes 'regular' follow-up visits, most only do so

'from time to time' and a few 'never' do. The result is that 5 of the 11 headteachers in the sample are either 'totally unsatisfied' or 'rather unsatisfied' with actions taken by the administration. They claim that only rarely do supervisors act on recommendations in reports. On the other hand, they recognized that, where some follow-up was *undertaken, it led to clear improvement.* In Tanzania, school staff finds the actions of supervisors to be insufficient and ineffective, and they quote three reasons: the lack of follow-up visits, the fact that supervisors do not succeed in solving practical problems such as the scarcity of equipment, and the fact that they rely on Ward Education Co-ordinators, who seldom have the knowledge or the authority to amend problems. Supervisors confirm that, although follow-up visits are planned for, the number of visits and other activities undertaken to implement recommendations is insufficient, for which they blame mainly financial constraints.

In Zimbabwe, the interviewed supervision staff were asked how regularly they undertake follow-up visits: one answered 'never', three 'irregularly' and two 'regularly'. Shortage of transport and of funds were the main reasons why follow-up was not systematic. Three-quarters of the 12 school heads confirmed this lack of follow-up and cited the same factors. It is somewhat surprising that five out of the six officers are satisfied with the level of follow-up action taken at administrative level, while – as we saw before – four of them are dissatisfied with the way schools react. Headteachers have quite a different opinion: most, as indicated above, claim to undertake various steps after an inspection visit to implement its advice, while more than 40 per cent of them are unhappy with the administrative follow-up. In rural schools, that figure is much higher, which reveals a worrying disparity between regions. Some heads complained that 'recommendations made by one supervisor are completely ignored by the next one'.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1. Impact on school functioning and quality

To gain a balanced picture of the impact of supervision on the functioning of schools and the quality of teaching, it is necessary to distinguish between the opinions of supervisors themselves, headteachers and teachers. In addition, a difference needs to be made between their opinion on the supervision service as a whole, in its present state, and their feelings about the impact of the particular activities of supervision and support staff, especially school visits. Not all countries have systematically collected all of these different viewpoints, but sufficient information is available to gain an overall impression. It should be kept in mind that opinions have been collected from among a small sample of staff in each of the four countries and that they reflect the specific situation and characteristics of the district or region in which they are posted.

(a) Impact of school visits

Let us look first at supervisors' opinions about their visits. The 11 advisory teachers interviewed in Namibia feel that their work has had an impact on schools, as they note visible improvement in several schools over recent years. In Zimbabwe, three out of six supervisors consider their impact on schools to be 'very strong', one 'strong' and two 'fair'. They say their recommendations are generally implemented and, as a result, performance of heads and teachers has improved. They also believe that the reports of visits are used by higher authorities and therefore influence positively the development of schools.

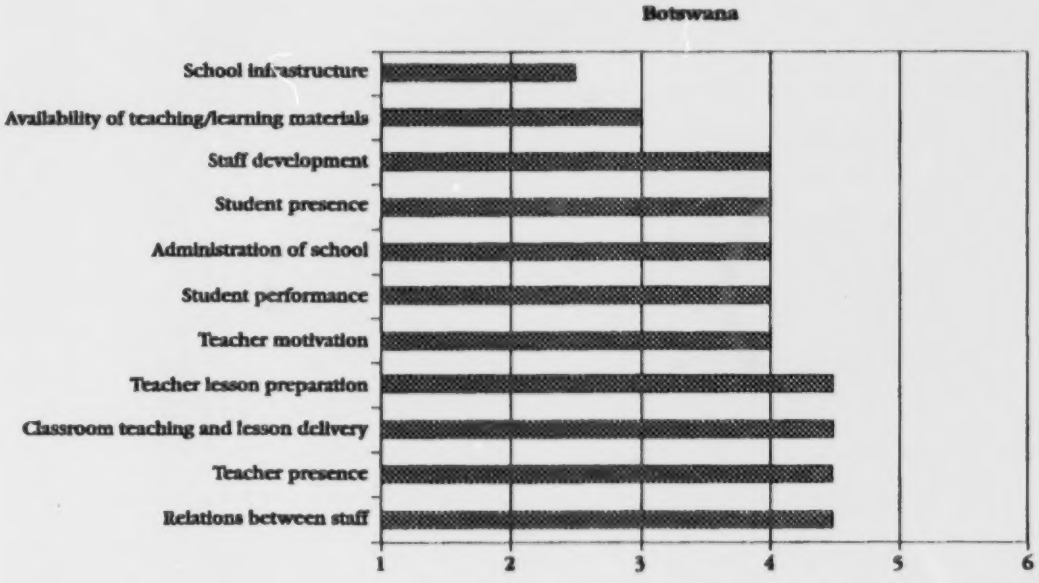
More important than the opinions of supervisors themselves, are those of headteachers and teachers. The graphs on the following pages summarize the answers to a question addressed to the sample of school heads in each of the four countries. They were asked to evaluate the impact of a supervision visit on 11 or 12 different aspects of the school, on a scale from 1 (negative) over 2 (none), 3 (limited), 4 (fairly positive) and 5 (positive) to 6 (strongly positive). From the average scores presented in the graphs it can be deduced that the interviewed heads are (or at least declare to be) rather satisfied with supervision visits. On almost all aspects the impact is assessed to be between fairly positive and positive. In all four countries, the impact is felt to be especially strong on teacher performance (lesson preparation and delivery) and on teacher presence. There is, except in Namibia, a less positive evaluation where teacher motivation is concerned. The score is generally lowest regarding availability of teaching/learning materials and school infrastructure, issues on which supervisors can make recommendations, but take very little action. Impact on issues related to management by the headteacher is considered to be fairly high.

Teachers' opinions were not collected as systematically as those of headteachers, except in one country, Botswana. There, teachers are, as a rule, more critical than headteachers in their assessment of the impact of visits, with two notable exceptions: they consider that supervision has a very high impact on classroom delivery and a high one on teacher motivation. Remarks made by teachers in the other countries show, as in Botswana, satisfaction with the effect of visits, but on a level lower than that of headteachers. It is appropriate to mention here that headteachers probably have other expectations from supervision than teachers. They might want visits to be in part oriented towards teacher control and discipline, not exclusively towards pedagogical development, the main concern of teachers.

In Tanzania, some additional information was available, collected through two other research projects. An inspection-impact study on secondary schools, undertaken as part of the English Language Teaching Support Project (ELTSP), concluded that, 'the inspectors have played an important part in the progress and success of ELTSP'. Secondly, a survey among teachers, undertaken by the inspectorate, revealed that teachers were of the opinion that some inspection visits led to improvements, in areas such as:

- the preparation and use of teaching materials;
- the use of English in the schools;
- evaluation of pupils' work;
- general school administration.

Figure 11. Headteachers' responses on the impact of supervision on schools: average scores



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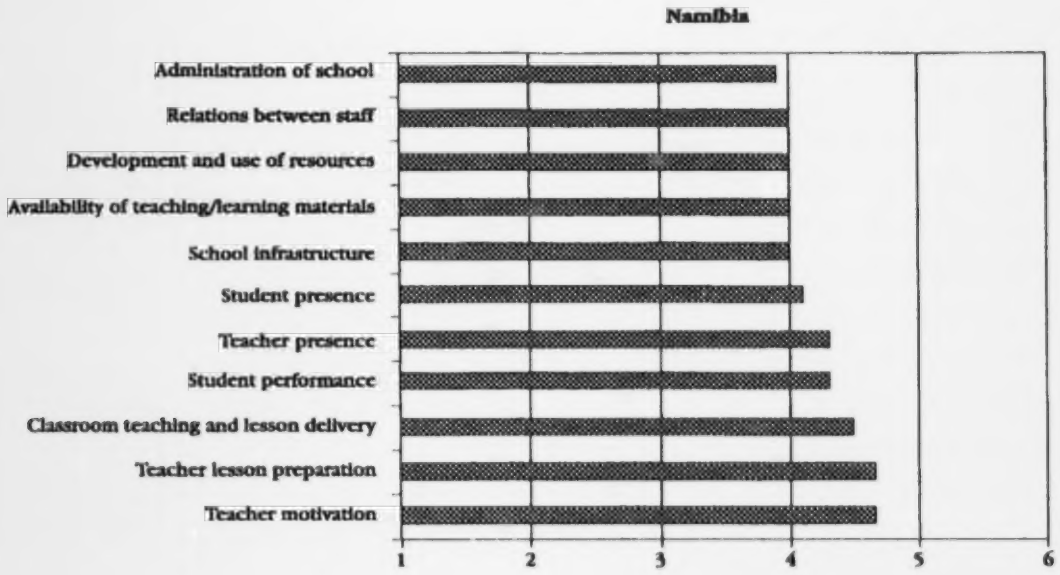
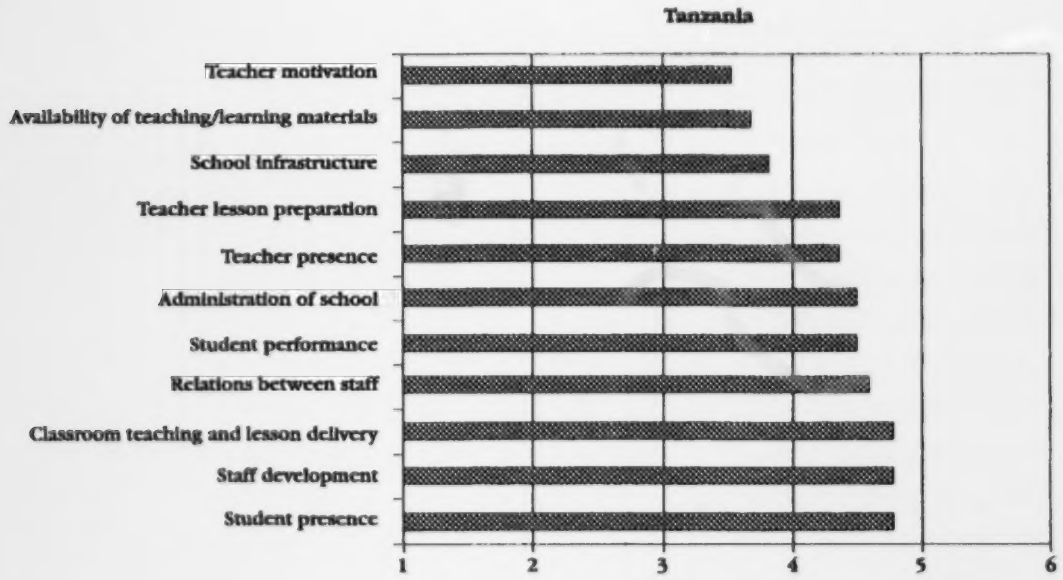
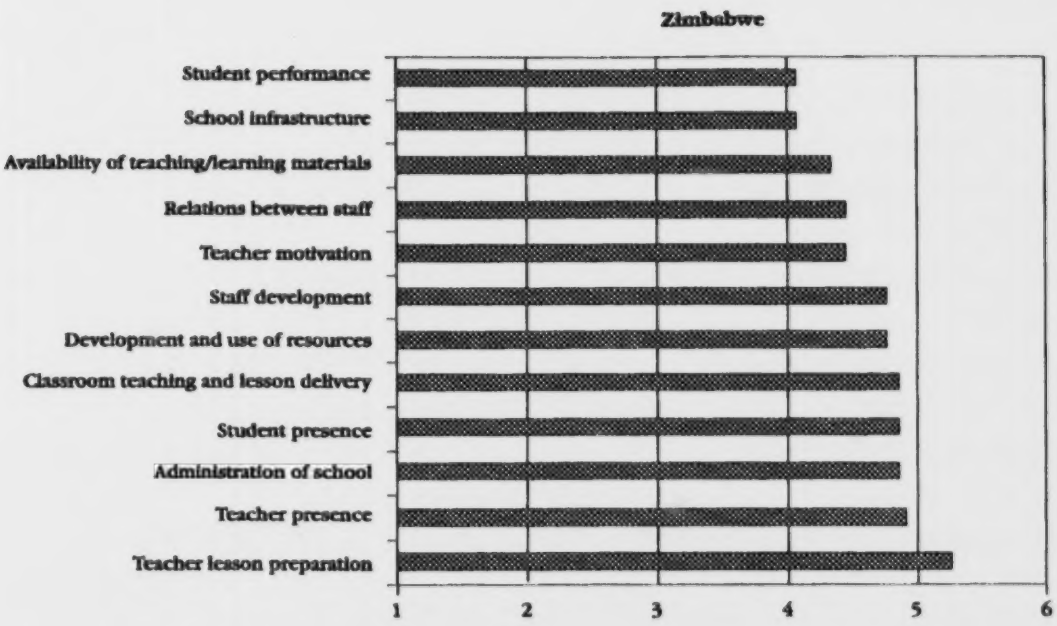

Namibia
Administration of school
Relations between staff
Development and use of resources
Availability of teaching/learning materials
School infrastructure
Student presence
Teacher presence
Student performance
Classroom teaching and lesson delivery
Teacher lesson preparation
Teacher motivation
1
2
3
4
5
6


Tanzania
Teacher motivation
Availability of teaching/learning materials
School infrastructure
Teacher lesson preparation
Teacher presence
Administration of school
Student performance
Relations between staff
Classroom teaching and lesson delivery
Staff development
Student presence
1
2
3
4
5
6



The data presented in *Figure 11* and other – more anecdotal – evidence allow us to conclude that visits are generally well appreciated by headteachers and teachers. However, a few amendments should be added to this positive image.

Not all types of visits nor all activities within a visit, are equally well appreciated. In Zanzibar, teachers prefer visits which examine the school as a whole over the individual teacher inspection. In Zimbabwe, on the other hand, school heads considered teacher inspections to be the most useful, as they necessarily focus on what is the core of the school's quality, namely what occurs in the classroom. This difference in opinions seems to confirm what has been noted before, namely that teachers and headteachers both appreciate visits, but for different reasons. The headteacher sees teacher supervision as helpful to his or her management of the school. It can be an additional tool in attempts to ensure discipline among teachers and to assert headteacher authority. The teachers feel that institutional inspections can help them in arguing for changes, where necessary, in the way the school is run. This points to a wider issue: a supervision

visit is never a neutral act. It is an intervention, if not an invasion, in a school's daily life, which the different actors will try to use for their own benefit maybe more than for the wider benefit of the school.

Headteachers in Zimbabwe make the following distinction: they approve most of teacher inspections, followed by full and institutional inspections, and courtesy visits, which – because of their informal character – allow for a free exchange of opinions and views between supervisors and school staff. They make a negative assessment of spot checks and follow-up visits; spot checks, because of their almost intrinsic fault-finding character, and follow-up visits, because these are seldom clearly linked to the preceding visits and therefore lose their sense of being. In Tanzania, general supervision visits and courtesy visits were considered most useful, as well as inspection of physical structure of the school, which is an especially worrying issue. In Botswana, full inspections were considered by heads and teachers alike to be of most assistance.

Within a visit, the post-supervision meeting with the staff is singled out as the most helpful part, because it allows staff to share ideas and discuss their experiences and viewpoints with each other and with supervisors. As such, supervisors might gain a more precise, more balanced view of a school's functioning. In addition, classroom observation and staff development activities, formal as well as more informal, are well appreciated. It seems therefore that supervision which allows for teacher participation and focuses on teacher development is felt by teachers to be of most assistance.

Another point worth raising is that not all schools appreciate visits in the same way. The data in *Figure 11* are averages which hide quite important differences of opinion. These differences will obviously relate to the particular supervisor. The impact study on English

language teaching in Tanzania, referred to above, showed dissatisfaction with some inspectors. Teachers' main complaints were that they demoralize teachers through harsh comments and that they give impractical advice. Each school also has a different experience and a different opinion. To some extent, this is the result of their location. The Zimbabwe case study includes some data to illustrate this. Urban schools on the whole evaluate the impact of supervision visits much higher (5.4) than peri-urban (4.2) and rural (4.3) schools. Rural schools complain especially about the short duration of visits, as much time is taken up by travelling from office to school and back. This is particularly deplorable, as those schools employ most of the newly appointed, inexperienced teachers. Urban headteachers, while generally satisfied with supervision visits, feel that they are experienced and qualified enough to take over part of the supervision tasks. They claim, at the same time, that a long-term beneficial impact can only be achieved through allowing for more in-school supervision.

(b) Impact of the supervision service

While visits as such are considered in many cases a valuable and helpful exercise, this does not imply that there will be overall satisfaction with the functioning and effectiveness of supervision and support services. One of the main complaints of all groups is that supervisors do not visit schools regularly enough. Another is that follow-up on visits is unsystematic and deficient. For an overall evaluation, several factors, which go beyond an assessment of visits, need to be looked at, in particular:

- the time supervisors spend on administrative and other activities which have little, if anything, to do with school quality;
- the workload of supervisors and the ensuing regularity of visits;
- the feedback on visits by different actors (supervisors and the other staff in the education management system);

- **the extent and nature of other development-oriented activities in which supervisors are engaged, such as in-service training, meetings and workshops, and the impact of those on schools.**

The following paragraphs examine the situation of each country in more detail.

In ***Botswana***, while the interviewed teachers and headteachers identified several aspects of supervision visits as useful, they felt that the overall impact of the service on their daily work left something to be desired. They singled out three main weaknesses. The number of visits is too small and those which take place are irregular and not well planned. The follow-up is insufficient: supervisors do not send reports quickly enough to schools and do not systematically act upon recommendations. They recognize, in the same breath, that schools themselves could also do more, by for instance preparing action plans linking up with the inspection reports' recommendations, but they are not given the resources to do so. This is linked to their third critique: the Ministry does not act upon the schools' rightful complaints about their material situation, in particular with regard to equipment and infrastructure.

The impact of supervision and support services on schools in ***Namibia*** is on the whole assessed as weak. The number of staff in some regions, especially some advisory staff, is too few compared to schools and teachers. This is mainly because many posts are left unfilled. But other, more management-related reasons also intervene. Firstly, these services are not yet well organized: they receive little support and co-ordination is lacking. Secondly, since some supervisors have no experience as headteachers, school principals find it easy to refuse or argue with their advice, while the supervisors themselves at times do not feel at ease. Sometimes, as a reaction, their style will become more authoritarian. A third management weakness is that the flow of information to schools is slow and ineffective.

In ***Tanzania***, although school visits were considered useful, the overall impact of supervision and support services was felt to be weak, for the well-known reasons that inspectors in Tanzania, because of their poor working conditions, cannot give consistent support and supervision. Their visits are too rare and too short, their working environment de-motivating, and, in quite a number of cases, teachers expressed doubts about their competence, a worry not unlinked to the selection procedure which does not always succeed in identifying the right staff for this job. Many schools function under as difficult circumstances as the supervisors and consider that their first need is for better materials and equipment, aspects not under the control of inspectors. When inspectors make recommendations in this regard, those lead to little, if any, change.

We know little about the regularity of inspection, the duration or the nature of visits in ***Zanzibar***. The report mentions that supervision can have a positive impact, mainly by spreading innovations from one school to another and allowing teachers to express their problems. However, the impact on schools is constrained by the problems faced in schools: lack of instructional materials, poorly motivated and untrained teachers.

The ***Zimbabwe*** report is on the whole the least critical of the impact of the supervision service, which is believed to be having a positive impact on schools in different ways, for instance by:

- informing the Ministry of the needs felt by the schools;
- making Ministry regulations known to schools;
- advising schools how to get the community involved;
- collecting data and recommending specific interventions;
- organizing in-service training;
- improving the schools' physical aspect (cleanliness especially).

The overall picture gained so far is a little confused, for different reasons. Supervisors, headteachers and teachers do not have the same opinions, as they do not share the same expectations. Schools also

differ in their experiences, and the averages hide significant disparities, which depend to some extent on the school's location and evidently on the personality of the inspecting officer.

There are some conclusions that come quite clearly to the fore. Supervisors are – not unexpectedly – more satisfied than school staff. They feel that their interventions can be of help and give examples of how some schools have changed because of their work. At the same time, they recognize nevertheless the limits on what they can achieve, but put the responsibility for this outside of their own hands.

Headteachers and teachers are more critical towards the supervision service. They appreciate certain activities, in particular school visits with an evident pedagogical character, but they feel that the impact of the service on what goes on in school is weak. They realize that the reasons are diverse, but feel that some of the responsibility is the supervisors' own. While supervisors do work in constraining circumstances, their attitudes are not always helpful and their interventions too control focused. It is noteworthy that there exist differences in opinion between headteachers and teachers, the latter group being more critical in general, but much depends on the objectives of the supervisors: when they focus on control of school management, they are more easily accepted by teachers than when they concentrate on teacher inspection.

All actors – teachers, headteachers and, somewhat less strongly, supervisors themselves – deplore one main weakness: more attention needs to be given to the follow-up on recommendations. A school visit, a teacher inspection, a training course, a meeting with school leaders should also be stages in a cycle which leads towards school improvement. In many cases, they are one-off events, which might lead to a report, but to nothing much more. This probably is the biggest disappointment to supervisors and school staff alike.

The following section will look in more detail at the challenges which supervision and support staff face in order to offer more effective and enduring assistance to schools and teachers.

2. Main challenges

The problems experienced and challenges faced by the four countries are different in nature and in extent. While problems of management and even structure of the service are of more concern in Botswana and Namibia, a more basic problem, namely poor working conditions, is top of the agenda in Tanzania. Some issues, for instance the lack of continuous training programmes, are common to all countries. The following paragraphs review, in detail, the main concerns identified by each report, including through the case studies.

Botswana is faced with a serious management problem, especially at secondary level. Different issues are involved: the number of staff, which has been decentralized to the regional offices, is insufficient, as these officers have to act as subject specialists. There are therefore too few officers in the region to cover all the subjects and to form effective supervision and support teams. Moreover, the regional offices at primary level (which were established much earlier and have sufficient personnel) are different from those at secondary level, which complicates matters and makes co-ordination more difficult. The problems are compounded by the recruitment practices and salary structure, which lead secondary-school principals to consider many supervisors to be their juniors. As a result, the post of secondary-school supervisor is not necessarily attractive to the most experienced and competent teachers.

Training is a second problematic area: the absence of a comprehensive training programme for primary as well as secondary supervisors is mentioned: training so far has been mainly ad hoc and without linkage between the different actors. A third problem relates to the lack of lasting impact of supervision visits

on schools. Several factors play a role. Firstly, the relatively heavy workload especially of secondary-school supervisors, who have more than just supervision tasks, but also of primary-school supervisors. Secondly, the fact that visits are considered by school staff still insufficient in number and irregular. Thirdly, the lack of an organized follow-up, aggravated by the fact that inspection reports take a long time to arrive in schools. Fourthly, the relative powerlessness of supervisors who, for instance, can take very few decisions where school infrastructure or didactic materials are concerned. Two further problems are mentioned, but their significance seems less:

- attitudes of supervisory staff, who are not sufficiently supportive;
- inadequate transport facilities coupled, in a few cases, with insufficient office accommodation.

In ***Namibia*** the management problems are caused by a lack of co-ordination between services and between regions, coupled with insufficient central guidance. At present, the functions of the different directorates are not clearly defined, job descriptions are not available and the flow of information, horizontally and vertically, is not efficient. This contributes to the lack of co-ordination. In addition, as in Botswana, a salary issue complicates matters: secondary-school principals earn more than inspectors, which damages the inspector's authority and renders the job less attractive.

The workload of officers, especially in the Northern regions, is too heavy. It is also in those regions that the most serious transport problems exist. On the whole, however, working conditions for supervision and support staff are rather good. The recruitment of officers, on the other hand, is far from satisfactory. Many candidates, some of whom are appointed, do not have the necessary qualifications or experience. In addition, officers are appointed to posts without the necessary briefing about their functions. The many vacancies, especially among advisory teachers, exacerbate the problems.

The planning and management of the actual supervision tasks also need improvement. Three problems are explicitly mentioned in the report: proper planning and co-ordination of visits, better communication with schools, and stronger support from the regional office to inspectors and advisory teachers. In Namibia, as elsewhere, supervision and support staff feel constrained by their lack of influence over the material aspects of schools. The report considers that, in spite of the conditions, the attitude of supervisory staff is generally good.

Tanzania's problems are, on the whole, of more concern than those of other countries. They relate, more than elsewhere, to financial constraints, but ineffective management and organization are also at stake.

Office accommodation and facilities are inadequate, as are funds to visit schools. The lack of transport is a core constraint on inspectors' efficiency, which has rendered many inspection offices immobile. The almost complete absence of basic communication tools (telephone for instance) increases inspectors' sense of isolation. Furthermore, as some inspectors have had to leave their offices for non-payment of rent, the distance to schools has become insurmountable. The report contends that the average workload would be manageable if transport were available. This neglect explains to a large extent the very low working morale among inspectors, and the lack of appreciation for their work.

When inspectors are able to go out to visit schools, the case study notes two weaknesses. Firstly, some inspectors have the wrong attitude: they blame rather than help teachers and thus encounter resistance rather than openness to advice. The lack of transparency of inspection practices increases teachers' resistance. Secondly, insufficient action is taken upon the recommendations in the reports, either by the inspectors themselves or by the higher echelons of the administration. Effective feed-back mechanisms need to be set up.

The report also expresses doubt about the competence of supervision staff. Proper recruitment procedures were not in place at the moment of writing the report. People without the necessary skills are appointed and are unable to

bring about change in schools. This situation is made still worse by their low academic qualifications and the scarcity of in-service training. The change in qualification requirements (from 'O' level to Diploma) in 1997 could herald a more significant reform in recruitment.

Poor co-ordination between services also leads to inefficiency. This is particularly true for the relationship between the primary-school inspectors, who are the 'traditional' inspectors and the teacher resource centres. The Teacher Resource Centre system is managed by different agencies.[27] No co-ordinating body exists: the autonomy of these centres has meant, unfortunately, that other staff are unaware of what they actually do.

Zanzibar lists the main problems as follows:

- the lack of specific training programmes;
- the lack of support;
- the complete absence of career development opportunities;
- the heavy workload: inspection visits, writing reports and handouts, controlling private schools, conducting seminars, etc.;
- the poor co-ordination between services, which results in a lack of follow-up: for instance, the inspection reports are not acted upon by the DEOs or the departments to which they have been sent.

The ***Zimbabwe*** report highlights several problems, but groups them under four headings: management issues, working conditions, co-ordination and attitudes. The two latter ones need little further explanation. As in other countries, co-ordination between services is weak, and supervisors do not always show a positive attitude. This attitudinal problem, supervisors claim, is the result of what they feel is the disregard from which their reports and recommendations suffer.

27. At the time of writing, 10 different agencies managed resource centres, including UNICEF, the World Bank, Dutch, Irish, Danish and British agencies and District Development Councils.

They are of the opinion that they have little impact on schools, but even less on policies. Some policies actually hamper their work. The example they give is that of 'free education', which makes it very difficult to persuade parents to contribute to the development of schools. In general, however, supervisors remain committed to their job.

Several management issues are mentioned. Firstly, recruitment, particularly of secondary officers, is problematic because some heads and deputy heads occupy posts of the same grade as EOs. Therefore, as elsewhere, heads do not compete for the position of EOs, and, as a result, several posts, especially at secondary, remain vacant. Secondly, continuous and specialist training, and professional support in general, are lacking Thirdly, monitoring is ineffective: supervisors' performance is judged mainly on the quantity of reports that they produce for a given period, while their impact on teachers and students so far plays only a minor role, although efforts are being made to emphasize the latter point more. Fourthly, the absence of clear norms de-motivates staff. Finally, their career opportunities are very limited.

Another issue, related to management, concerns the lack of autonomy at district level. The report stresses that decentralization, although an official policy, is not consistently implemented, especially not where resources are at stake. Funds remain centrally controlled, which has at least two negative effects on district supervision: planning within the districts is dependent upon the availability of those funds, and the room for manoeuvre of supervisors to act upon their own recommendations becomes more limited.

While material working conditions are not as difficult as those in Tanzania, there are nonetheless some complaints, mainly the result of financial constraints, which are mentioned in every recent annual report. A shortage of transport, for example, has meant that some teachers, even some in fairly accessible schools, have not been supervised for more than a decade. Supervisors increasingly depend on other offices or even private people for transport, which makes rational planning of visits very difficult. The emphasis on writing reports, coupled with

the lack of secretarial support staff, means that a lot of time is spent on this one activity. The fact that the number of schools and teachers per supervisor has increased, has further compounded a heavy workload. In Kwekwe district, for instance, the number of teachers per supervisor is on average about 300, while the same supervisors are expected to undertake many different tasks.

A final point mentioned by the Zimbabwe report relates to the poor involvement by communities in school supervision. Not only do communities not play a special role in ensuring teachers' presence or checking on their performance, but they are only seldom contacted by supervisors, when in schools, and are not informed of supervision reports or recommendations. From the information available, it seems that the situation in other countries is no better.

Supervision services in the four countries face a myriad of problems, and simply listing these, as was done above, could easily lead to a sense of discouragement. It is useful therefore to distinguish, within this long list, what can be considered as root causes from what are more results. Drawing up such a framework is not simply helpful from an analytical point of view, but is also a pre-condition to drawing up any plan to redress and reform the supervision system. The root causes for the present weakness of the supervision service can be classified in three categories: a lack of resources; inefficient management; and an organizational structure not adapted to the present realities.

The lack of resources has multiple implications. The number of supervisors has not kept pace with the numbers of schools and teachers; as a result, the school/supervisor and teacher/supervisor ratios are high. Every single officer at primary level is responsible for some 20 or more schools and hundreds of teachers. This workload becomes more difficult to manage if it is combined with a lack of financial resources to travel and with material resources (filing

cabinets, typewriters, telephones) of poor quality and insufficient in number. Most supervision offices in Tanzania suffer from this almost complete absence of resources and have become ghost-like in state. Elsewhere, the situation is less worrying: although the numbers of staff are comparable to those in Tanzania, they can work with better and more resources. But this should not lead to complacency anywhere, as the supervision and support service remains under-financed in all four countries. The impact of this neglect is at times a somewhat isolated and de-motivated staff, who face a heavy workload and feel to be operating against the odds.

Management problems are experienced in several areas of management: selection and recruitment; training; career development and incentives; and support and evaluation. These are not unrelated to the lack of resources, as management obviously becomes more intricate in an environment of scarcity. But some inefficiencies cannot be explained by lack of resources, but seem the result of inappropriate decisions or a wider neglect. Solving these inefficiencies could actually help in overcoming the resource constraints.

Identifying the 'right' recruitment criteria is not an easy matter. Qualifications and experience both seem important, but at primary level, many of the most experienced teachers do not necessarily have a strong academic background, because they entered the teaching profession a long time ago, when qualification requirements were rather low. This is still the scenario in Tanzania, but seems no longer to be the case in the other countries, where primary-school supervisors generally have both a strong background and qualifications, higher than the teachers they supervise. Tanzania, in any case, is also making its recruitment criteria stricter. At secondary level, the situation is more complicated: supervisors are generally

recruited from among subject specialists, few have experience in school management and they occupy a post at the same grade as the secondary-school principals. Many principals therefore do not consider supervisors as their superiors and refuse their advice. Maybe one should think about creating a specific cadre of school management supervisors, as distinct from subject inspectors, with recruitment criteria and a post of a grade adapted to their more demanding job description. A somewhat different problem, mentioned explicitly in Namibia and Tanzania, concerns the non-respect of existing rules and norms, which puts into discredit not only the individual staff member, who benefits from this anomaly, but the whole service.

There is little need to comment in detail on the fragility of training for supervisors. In all four countries, there are concerns with both the organization and the content of training courses. When such courses are organized, they are ad hoc rather than forming part of an overall programme of professional development, and seldom seem to address the real needs of supervision staff. In Tanzania, in recent years, less and less such courses have taken place, while in the three other countries supervisors take part from time to time in training workshops, but these have insufficient linkage to their daily practice.

A further management problem concerns the lack of career development opportunities: for most supervisors, their present post is the culmination of their career, a reward for many years of service in schools. This evidently risks to turn the supervision service into a conservative body, with little motivation to innovate and look for new challenges. Changing this reality is not evident, as it is linked, on the one hand, to the recruitment criteria and, on the other hand, to the hierarchical structure of the education management system.

Arguably more easy to redress are the weaknesses in the support given to supervisors and in their evaluation. While in all four countries, some official forms exist which help inspectors in performing their tasks (such as: standard report forms, circulars and guidelines), nowhere does this support take a more comprehensive form, through for instance manuals, regular meetings, newsletters and so on. The issue of evaluation has two aspects. On the one hand, in some cases, most clearly so in Zimbabwe, there is an absence of clear norms on what is expected from officers. This is detrimental not just to their evaluation, but also to the planning of their own work and to their accountability. On the other hand, most norms, which have been formulated, relate to the number of visits and reports, and much less to the quality and the impact of the supervisor's work. Quantitative norms are of course much easier to assess, but they could give the wrong message, asking supervisors to undertake as many visits as possible rather than to reflect on the impact their various interventions could have on schools. Judging the quality of their work by examining the ways in which schools improve is more intricate, but ultimately more beneficial: it could make supervisors jointly accountable with schools for the quality of the teaching and learning, thus closing the gap which now exists between the school and the supervisor. Zimbabwe is to some extent going in that direction.

The organizational problems which the service experiences, relate to four points. Firstly, in a number of countries, parts of the service are still relatively young or have undergone change recently, and their present structure lacks clarity (in Namibia) or logic (in Botswana). Secondly, co-ordination is difficult, especially between the supervision service and other services which work towards pedagogical improvement, such as teacher training, curriculum development and examinations. The linkage with the upper levels of the administration is similarly elusive, while the relationship between

supervisors and the newly established teacher resource centres is weak. The follow-up to school visits suffers from this lack of co-ordination. Recommendations made in inspection reports and addressed to the administrative and/or pedagogical authorities, remain words in the wind, which frustrates the school staff as well as the supervisors. School staff are at times left with a sense of confusion, when the advice coming from different corners does not go in the same direction. A third issue, with regard to the organization of the supervision and support service, concerns the very demanding job description of supervisors, who are asked to handle a load of administrative and pedagogical tasks.

The fourth point in this regard might well be the most worrying. In all four countries, supervisors feel constrained, even frustrated, by their lack of autonomy and authority to take action, especially on their own recommendations. School heads are in a similar situation. Overcoming these constraints implies, however, a profound change in the management system and culture and, but less crucially, a strengthening of management capacities at district and school levels. As long as this is not the case, supervisors at times use their lack of authority as an excuse for inaction.

The results of these varied problems are that supervisors face a heavy workload, with few resources. This leads to a lack of motivation and has a negative impact on the actual operation of the service. Inspectors, who do not have the resources or the time to give detailed and profound support to schools, quickly, as a defensive reaction, take on control-oriented and critical attitudes, which are poorly appreciated by school staff. Planning their work becomes more difficult, if they do not have access to their own transport and have regularly to undertake administrative tasks, with little connection to their work. In the same vein, supervisors do not seem to identify clear

priorities, neither concerning the type of interventions nor concerning the particular schools to be visited.

The overall conclusion seems to be that there is insufficient close contact – through school visits, seminars, courses and so on – between supervisors and schools. Especially, follow-up actions on visits or reports are scarce. It is not surprising then that many schools feel that the overall impact of the supervision and support service on what goes on in school is weak.

3. Present reforms and trends

Education managers and decision-makers are conscious of the weaknesses of the existing supervision services. They are making attempts to improve on that situation: some reforms are being implemented on a nationwide scale, others on a pilot-basis, while still others have only been announced, so far. The overall picture emerging is nevertheless encouraging, as changes are occurring in three main areas: the management, the organization of the service and its actual operation.

Management reforms

All four countries are fully conscious of the perverse effects of some existing management rules and practices. There are indications that policies are being reformulated and that some practices have changed, relating to recruitment; training and support; the preparation of job descriptions; and evaluation and monitoring procedures. In Tanzania, the 1995 Education and Training Policy emphasizes the demand for recruitment procedures to be more transparent and to be the result of stricter procedures. However, so far this has remained a policy declaration. In Zimbabwe, recruitment has become more transparent, through systematic advertisement of

vacant posts, interviews of candidates, and the convening of a Promotion Committee involving all regional directors.

Everywhere the need for more and better-organized training and professional support to supervisors is recognized. The Revised National Policy on Education in Botswana recommended that "a comprehensive training programme should be implemented as a matter of urgency". The 1995 Education and Training Policy in Tanzania did similarly. All four countries are involved in a programme to develop training materials for inspectors, in the framework of the working group on Teacher Management and Support, set up within the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat. Namibia, through the compilation of a manual for school principals and the organization of several management courses, also aims at enhancing the support available to education personnel, in schools and in offices. The overall impression gained from the reports remains somewhat pessimistic: no consistent, sustainable and regular national training programmes exist, while international or regional ones are not yet covering more than a few supervisors.

Both Botswana and Namibia see the need to define more clearly the tasks of the different categories of supervision and support staff. In Namibia, this forms an integral part of a Performance Management System, which should clearly set out the tasks of the different officers and the criteria on which they will be evaluated. This will help in monitoring their work and in giving them support.

Organizational reforms

The second set of reforms concerns the organization of the supervision services, the way in which these services are structured

and the responsibilities given to the different levels and actors. Four aspects can be identified.

Firstly, there exists a willingness to co-ordinate more strongly existing services at a central level. In Botswana, the Revised National Policy on Education has recommended that "the inspection of schools should be under one department of inspection formed from an enhanced amalgamation of the existing departmental inspectorates". Namibia is also planning to change its central structure, by integrating three Directorates (Inspectorate and Advisory Services, Education Programme Implementation and Special Education) into one. This office should be better staffed, so that it can play the co-ordinating role it is expected to.

Secondly, to allow for a closer and more regular supervision of schools, these are brought together into clusters and officers are given the responsibility for one such group of schools, with their office sometimes being located at that level. In Namibia, within the existing Okahao circuit for instance, three school clusters have been set up. In Zimbabwe, the larger Kwekwe district has organized its schools into 21 clusters. The purpose of such clusters is not simply to facilitate the planning and to increase the coverage of external supervision and advice, but especially to strengthen support activities between the schools. In Zimbabwe, this clustering forms part of the Better Schools Programme, which has also organized management training for senior staff in schools and links school clusters to district resource centres. To some extent, such clusters existed already in Tanzania in the form of wards, the smallest administrative division. Ward education co-ordinators, however, do not have the necessary skills or background to play the role of a supervisor. Suggestions are therefore made to retrain them so as to strengthen their supportive potential to schools.

Thirdly, and following logically from the above, there is an increased stress on in-school supervision and support. In Botswana, two recommendations of the Revised Policy emphasize the need to decentralize support tasks, in particular staff development and in-service training, to the school level. To enable senior staff to play this role, the Secondary Schools Management Development Project (SSMDP) was implemented between 1993 and 1996 and is now institutionalized as part of the Ministry's official programme. The establishment of Staff Development Committees in secondary schools goes in the same direction. They carry out needs assessment and draw up programmes for school-based training, using expertise from within or outside the school. A project similar to the SSMDP, for primary education, started in October 1997. Thirty primary-school heads are following a two-year intensive training course in the UK. On their return, they will be based at Education Centres and be responsible for the staff development of a cluster of schools. Their role will be similar to that of the School Management Adviser, working at secondary level. In Zimbabwe, the Ministry is in principle fully in favour of strengthening in-school supervision. In this regard, headteachers of both primary and secondary schools have received or are receiving training in school management. In principle, each school has a board with members of the administration and teacher representatives. This board supervises, assists and advises teachers, and also has to assess and recommend them for promotion. In Kwekwe district, these boards were functioning well in urban schools, where staff are more stable. The Zimbabwe report noted regularly that urban schools consider their need for control through supervision to be limited, because of their good performance and the quality of their teaching staff.

Fourthly, the civil society and particular school communities are gradually being given an increased role in monitoring the functioning

and quality of schools. Tanzania is the country with the longest tradition in this regard: the 1995 Education and Training Policy of Tanzania again stressed the decentralization of school management to the school committees, which have mandatory powers to supervise several aspects of school functioning. In Namibia, the authorities also attempt to get civil society involved in education management, but at a regional level rather than in the management of individual schools. Each regional Council is expected to monitor, promote and oversee educational development in the Region. It should, therefore, establish a Regional Education Forum, which will advise regional education authorities, oversee school operations and protect the education interests of the communities. It should be composed of representatives of school boards, community leaders, church bodies, employers, trade unions, teachers' unions, NGOs and student organizations. As was seen earlier, in all four countries, there is quite some disagreement about the role and authority of individual school boards, for instance regarding their access to supervision findings.

Reforms in the daily operation

A third set of reforms concerns the actual operation and the focus of supervision activities, in particular of school visits. In Zanzibar, where structures and management have undergone little change, reforms have been introduced to the inspection process, to improve its impact on schools. Firstly, inspectors work more as a team rather than as individuals. Before, secondary-school inspectors worked separately from primary, who were in charge of their district only. Now, they can form teams and visit both primary and secondary schools. Secondly, there is a focus on school evaluation and less on individual teacher inspection. Thirdly, openness and transparency are encouraged in all school affairs and in supervision. This implies that all schools are notified two weeks beforehand of the date of inspection. As a result, where these reforms are actually being

implemented, teachers are beginning to consider inspectors as sources of help rather than of criticism. In Zimbabwe, there is a similar trend towards more openness and transparency. While inspection visits were previously unannounced and had the clear objective of discovering wrongdoings, pre-informed visits have now become the norm. While the right to conduct unannounced inspections still exists, the avowed purpose of the expected visits is to give support in an amicable spirit. The Ministry itself has also made its own procedures for recruiting and promoting staff more transparent. More inspections are now also undertaken by teams, with a focus on whole-school improvement rather than on individual teacher inspection.

Supervision findings could be used to improve individual schools, but are of equal value as an assessment of the functioning of the whole system. Only in Zimbabwe however does the service have, as a specific objective, system reform and improvement, through the methodical use of reports. The central Standards Control Unit every year visits a sample of schools within one region, for a global evaluation. It examines curriculum implementation and innovations, management, relations and development programmes. Reports, with strong recommendations, are sent to the Regional Director and these same recommendations serve the system.

One final trend, which seems more the result of practical constraints rather than a well-designed policy, lies in focusing supervision and support interventions to the schools most in need of these. Reference was already made to the opinions of urban headteachers in Zimbabwe, who do not feel regular external control to be indispensable to their rather well-functioning schools. The challenge now is to turn an existing but very ad-hoc practice into a well thought-out policy. A diversified supervision system, which concentrates on the most remote and isolated schools and on the

least experienced or weakest teachers, is a promising way out, not only to solve several practical problems, but also to guarantee a better impact of supervision services on schools.

It needs to be stressed, finally, that a reform programme which wants to overcome the many challenges facing supervision and support services in the Eastern and Southern African region, will need to be accompanied by a strong commitment to offer these services the necessary minimum basic resources to function. Without such commitment, any reform programme risks to have a very limited impact.

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This volume

School supervision is receiving increasing attention from researchers and policy-makers, because of the role it should play in monitoring and improving the quality of education. However, the contrast between its potential contribution and its actual impact on the quality of schools and teachers is striking, and has led to a sense of disappointment. This has been translated in some cases into a conviction that an education system could run without a supervision service – a conviction strengthened by the many anecdotes about the hurtful attitudes of supervisors who are too preoccupied with administrative issues.

This publication springs from a double realization. On the one hand, supervision services are here to stay in most countries and have a crucial role to play in the quality-improvement process. On the other hand, these services are in need of a comprehensive reform of their structure, management and daily operation. Such a reform strategy relies on a good insight into the present strengths and weaknesses of supervision systems. The aim of this publication is to add to our understanding, by diagnosing the situation of four countries in Africa: Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

One main conclusion is that reform is feasible with minimal additional financing. The most promising way forward is for the supervision service to concentrate on the needs of the disadvantaged schols, by offering them consistent support, rather than to try (and fail) to exercise control over all schools without distinction.

This publication forms part of the IIEP research and studies series on *Trends in school supervision*. **Volume II** presents the **four national diagnoses** undertaken as part of the study.

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